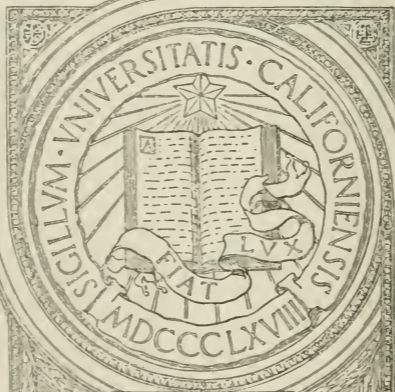


EKKEHARD

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Hadumoth.

EKKEHARD

A Tale of the Tenth Century

BY

JOSEPH V. VON SCHEFFEL

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN WITH ALL THE
NOTES OF THE 138TH EDITION

VOLUME II.

NEW YORK: 46 EAST 14TH STREET
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY
BOSTON: 100 PURCHASE STREET

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BY THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY

University Press
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

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EKKEHARD

CHAPTER XV.

HADUMOTH.

THE night was passing by. Long and dreary had it seemed to those intrusted with the watch on the battlefield. A grewsome horror lay upon earth and man.

“The Lord be merciful unto their souls,” sounded the low-voiced call of the watchman through the silence of the plain.

“And deliver them from the sufferings of purgatory, Amen!” was the response from the border of the forest, where his companions were cowering round a camp-fire. The heavy shadows of night covered the bodies of the slain, as if the heavens compassionately wished to hide what human hands had done there.

Then the clouds hurried away, as if themselves driven by the horror of the sight beneath them; others came, and likewise fled, ever changing their shapes and forms; losing one to assume another. . . . Everything is mutable; only in Death is eternal rest.

Those on the battlefield lay quiet, friend and enemy, as the billows of battle had left them.

One form, like that of a child, the watchman saw gliding over the battlefield. It bent down and walked on, and bent down again, and wandered back and forth; but he dared not call to it. He stood like one spell-bound.

It must be the angel who marks the foreheads of the dead with a letter, so that they may be recognized when the spirit returns to their bodies to make them live again and stand on their feet and be an army once more.

Such were his thoughts as he remembered the words of the prophet. He crossed himself and was silent; the figure vanished from before his eyes.

The morning dawned, and there came a number of men from the *arrière-ban* to relieve the monks. The duchess had sent them.

Herr Simon Bardo was not quite satisfied. "A victory is but half a victory," he said, "if it is not followed up. We ought to go after them until the last of them is annihilated."

But the monks insisted on their return, on account of the Easter holidays, and the others said:—

"Before we could catch up with their swift horses, we should have far to go. They have come to us, and we have beaten them; if they come again, we have more blows in store for them;—the work of yesterday deserves rest."

Then it was determined upon to bury the dead before the break of Easter Sunday.

So the men fetched their spades and hoes, and dug two wide trenches. On one side of the field there was an abandoned gravel-pit, which they widened into a spacious resting-place. There they deposited the dead Huns. Arms and equipments were taken off and collected, making many loads of booty. And they flung the corpses into the ditch without respect of persons, as they were brought. It was an indiscriminate mass of limbs, horses and men in wild confusion, — a throng as when the rebellious host of angels fell into hell.

The pit was filled. One of the grave-diggers came and brought a single head with cleft forehead and fierce expression.

“This must belong also to the heathens, and may look for its trunk below,” he cried, and flung it down among the corpses.

When the whole field had been searched, and not another Hun was to be found, they covered up the huge grave. It was a burial without song or solemnity; — only sundry curses rang out as a last farewell, and ravens and other birds of prey hoarsely screeched around. Those that had their nests in the rocky crannies of the Hohenkrähen, or built their eyries in the dark pine-wood beneath, had all come flying over; Moengal's hawk was also among them; they were raising their voices in protest against thus losing their rightful prey. With a hollow sound the clods of earth and pebbles fell into the wide grave.

Then came the deacon of Singen, with the vessel of consecrated water, and walked up and down the

quadrilateral, and sprinkled it to banish the demons and keep down the stranger dead who rested in the stranger earth.

A weather-beaten piece of rock, which, in bygone ages, had plunged down into the valley from the heights of the Hohentwiel, they rolled on the Hunnic grave. Then they turned away from the spot shivering, to get ready the second grave. This was to receive the fallen sons of the land.

The monastery church at Reichenau was designated as the last resting-place for those of priestly rank.

At the same hour in which the battle had begun the day before, a solemn procession descended from the Hohentwiel. These were the men who had won the battle. They advanced in the same order, but their gait was slow, and their standard was muffled in black crape. On the watch-tower of the castle the black flag had likewise been hoisted.

The duchess also rode with the train, stern and grave; she wore a dark mantle.

The dead monks were carried on biers and placed on the brink of the great grave, so that they might participate in the last homage rendered to their fellow-champions. When the last notes of the litany had died away, Abbot Wazmann approached the open grave and pronounced the farewell greeting and the thanks of the survivors to the ninety-six who lay there so pale and still, side by side.

“May their memory be blest, and may their remains rest in peace until the day of resurrec-

tion! May their names descend unto posterity, and may the glory of the holy champions bring down a blessing on their children!"

Thus he spoke in the words of the Preacher. Then he threw down the first handful of earth; the duchess after him; then the others one by one. Thereupon a solemn silence! Those who had fought side by side on the day before were to part again after the funeral; many a hard face showed signs of emotion; many a kiss and hearty shake of the hand were exchanged.

First to depart were those of the Reichenau, who set out for their monastery. The biers with the dead were borne along with them; brothers with lighted tapers walked beside them, chanting psalms. The corpse of the strife-weary old man from the Heidenhöhlen they also took with them. With drooping head the unknown warrior's war-horse, covered with a black cloth, had his place in the procession. It was a pathetic spectacle as the funeral train slowly entered the gloomy pine forest.

Then those of the *arrière-ban* took leave of the duchess. The gaunt Fridinger, with his arm in a sling, rode down the valley at the head of a troop. Only the baron of Randegg, with a few men, was to remain as a garrison for the Hohentwiel.

With emotion Frau Hadwig gazed after the departing ones. Then she slowly rode over the battlefield. The day before she had stood on the tower of the castle, anxiously following the tumult of the battle.

Herr Spazzo now had to explain a good many

things to her ; he indulged in some exaggeration, but the duchess seemed satisfied. She did not speak with Ekkehard.

When she too had returned home, the plain became silent and forsaken again as if nothing had happened there. Only the hoof-trampled grass, the damp, reddish earth, and the two huge tombs bore witness to the harvest which Death had gathered there.

It was not long before the blood was dried up and the grass had grown afresh. The mounds under which the dead rested were covered with moss and creepers. Birds and wind carried seeds there, and bushes and trees sprang up in rich luxuriance,—for plants thrive well where the dead are buried.

But the story of the battle with the Huns lives on in the memory of succeeding generations.¹⁶⁹ The mound on which the boulder stands as a gravestone is called the "Heidenbuck" by the inhabitants of the Hegau, and on Good Friday night no one there goes through the valley. Then earth and air belong to the dead ; they arise from their ancient grave. Here the little horses dart about again ; there the champions on foot eagerly press forward in a wedge ; and the armor glitters from under the dilapidated habits of the monks. The clatter of arms and wild war-cries rise louder than the tempest ; and fiercely rages the battle of the spirits in the air ; then suddenly from the island in the lake comes a knight in gilded armor, galloping along on a black steed, and drives them all back into their cool resting-places. Once

again the Hunnic chieftain tries to resist him, and angrily lifts his crooked sword; then the battle-mace falls on his head, — he also must descend . . . and everything is silent as before; only the young leaves of the birch-tree tremble in the wind . . .

Easter Sunday passed drearily and sadly. In the evening Frau Hadwig sat in the hall with Ekkehard, Herr Spazzo the chamberlain, and the knight of Randegg. It can be easily imagined what they talked about. The great events of the past days found an echo in all their speeches, like the echo of the Lurlei-rock in the Rhine: scarcely has the first tone died away along one wall when a hollow, rolling sound arises along the next; and so it goes on, reverberating from all sides as if it were never going to end.

The abbot of Reichenau had sent a messenger to report that they had found the monastery somewhat damaged, but the fire had not destroyed it; they had obliterated all traces of the Huns with holy water, and by carrying the sacred relics about, and had buried the dead.

“And the brother who stayed behind?” asked the duchess.

“On him the Lord God has shown that in the midst of danger and peril his Almighty power does not forget even childish minds. On our return he was standing on the threshold as if nothing had happened to him. ‘How didst thou like the Huns?’ shouted one of us to him. Whereupon he said, with his customary smile: ‘*Eia!* they pleased me very

well. Never before did I see such jolly fellows; and as for food and drink, they are wonderfully considerate! The pater cellarer has all my life long let my thirst be thirsty; but they gave me as much wine as I wanted: and if they gave me a fisticuff or two, and slapped my face, they made it up again with the wine; and that is more than any of you would have done. The only thing is, they lack discipline,—and, moreover, they have not yet learned how to behave in church’ . . . Heribald added that he could say many other things in praise of the stranger guests, but what he would only reveal in the confessional.” . . .

Frau Hadwig was not as yet inclined for amusement. She graciously dismissed the messenger, giving him the slain Hunnic chieftain’s finely wrought coat-of-mail, in order that it might be hung up in the monastery church as a lasting token. The duty of distributing the booty had been intrusted to her.

Herr Spazzo, whose tongue had not been lazy all this time in recounting his warlike deeds,—and the number of the Huns he had slain increased with every recital, like an avalanche,—now said, with dignity:—

“I have still another war-trophy to present, and it is destined for my gracious mistress herself.”

He went down to the lower rooms; there on the straw lay Capan, his prisoner. His wound had been dressed, and was not dangerous.

“Get up, thou son of the Devil!” cried Herr Spazzo, and gave him a rude kick. The Hun rose; his face took on a dubious expression, as if he did

not believe that his life was to last much longer. He limped through the room, leaning on a stick.

“Forwards!” pointed Herr Spazzo, and led the way up. He marched into the hall. “Halt!” cried Herr Spazzo. The unfortunate wretch stood still, and cast his eyes around in surprise.

With kindly interest Frau Hadwig looked at the strange human being. Praxedis also came near.

“Your prize is not handsome,” she had said to Herr Spazzo, “but it is remarkable.”

The duchess clasped her hands.

“And this is the nation before which the German land has trembled!” she exclaimed.

“The terror was caused by the multitude of them, and their always keeping together,” said the baron of Randegg. “They will never come back again!”

“Are you so very sure of that?” asked she, pointedly.

The Hun did not understand much of the conversation. His wounded leg hurt him, but he dared not sit down. Praxedis addressed him in Greek, but he stood shyly silent and shook his head. Then she tried by signs and nods to enter into an understanding with him; but this too was in vain.

“Allow me,” said she to the duchess, “I know of still another way to make him give us a sign of life: I have heard tell of it at Constantinople.”

She glided out of the hall and presently returned, carrying a cup which she presented with mock deference to the dumb prisoner.

It was a strong liquor, distilled from cherries, plums, and other fruit; the late castle-chaplain Vin-

centius had concocted many a similar cordial. Then the Hun's face became radiant; his stubby nose sniffed the aroma, and he emptied the cup as if he regarded it as a sign of peace; crossing his arms over his chest, he threw himself down before Praxedis, and kissed her shoe.

She made him a sign that the homage was due to the duchess, whereupon he wanted to repeat his thanks to her; but Frau Hadwig stepped back, and beckoned to the chamberlain to take his man away again.

"You have foolish notions," said she to him, when he had returned; "however, it was gallant of you to think of me in the midst of battle."

All this time Ekkehard had been silently sitting at the window, looking out over the country. Herr Spazzo's ways annoyed him; even Praxedis's jokes had hurt his feelings.

"In order to humiliate us," thought he, "the Lord has sent over the children of the desert to be a warning to us, and to teach us, on the ruins of the perishable, to think of that which is filled with the breath of the eternal;—the earth is still fresh over the graves of the slain, and these people are already jesting, as if all had been but an empty dream." . . .

Praxedis approached him.

"Why did not you likewise bring home some keepsake from the battle, professor?" she asked playfully. "A wonderful Hunnic amazon is said to have skirmished about there; if you had caught her, we should now have a fine little pair."

“Ekkehard has higher things to think of than Hunnic women,” said the duchess, in a bitter tone, “and he knows how to be silent, like one who has made a vow. Why should we need to know how he fared in the battle !”

This cutting speech hurt the serious-minded man. A jest at the wrong moment has the effect of vinegar on virgin honey.

Silently he walked out, brought back Herr Burkhard’s sword, drew it out of the scabbard, and flung it indignantly on the table before Frau Hadwig. Fresh red spots were still moistly glistening on the noble blade, and on the edge new notches were hacked.

“Whether the schoolmaster was idle,” said he, “this here may bear witness ! I have not made my tongue the herald of my deeds !”

The duchess was taken aback. She still bore him a grudge in her heart ; it urged her and almost compelled her fiercely to give it vent. But Herr Burkhard’s sword called up manifold thoughts. She restrained her anger and offered Ekkehard her hand.

“I did not mean to offend you,” said she.

The mildness of her voice sounded to him like a reproach ; he hesitated to take the proffered hand. He was on the point of asking her pardon for his roughness, but the words clove to his tongue. — Just then the door opened and he was spared the rest.

Hadumoth, the little shepherdess, came in. Shyly she stopped at the door. Her face was worn and tearstained. She did not venture to speak.

“What is the matter with thee, my poor child?” spoke Frau Hadwig. “Come nearer!”

The little maiden came forward. She kissed the duchess’s hand. Then she caught sight of Ekkehard, whose priestly garb gave her a feeling of awe. She went up to him also to kiss his hand; she tried to speak, but violent sobs choked her voice.

“Be not afraid,” said the duchess, soothingly; then she found words.

“I can not take care of the geese any more,” she said. “I must go away, and I would like thee to give me a gold-piece, as big a one as thou hast. When I come home again, I will work all my life long to repay it. I can not help it, but I must go!”

“And why must thou go, my child?” asked the duchess. “Has any one wronged thee?”

“He has not come home again!”

“There are many who have not come home again; but thou needest not go away on that account. Those who have fallen are now with God in heaven, and are in a large beautiful garden, and well off, and are much happier than we are.”

But Hadumoth shook her young head.

“Audifax is not with God,” she said; “he is with the Huns. I have searched for him down in the valley, and he was not amongst the dead men, and the charcoal burner’s boy from Hohenstoffeln, who also went out with the archers, himself saw how he was taken prisoner. . . . I must go and bring him away from there. I can find no peace if I don’t.”

“But how wilt thou find him?”

“That I don’t know. I shall go where the others

went. The world is wide, but in the end I shall find him. I am sure of it. The gold-piece which thou wilt give me, I will give to the Huns, and say: 'Let me have Audifax for this,' and when I get him, we shall both come home again."

Frau Hadwig delighted in all that was extraordinary.

"From this child we may all learn!" said she, lifting up the shy little Hadumoth, and kissing her on her forehead. "God is with thee, without thy knowing it. Therefore thy thoughts are great and bold. Who of you has a gold-piece handy?"

The baron of Randegg fetched one out. It was a large Goldthaler, and the Emperor Karl was engraved on it with a stern face and wide-open eyes, and on the obverse a crowned female head with an inscription was to be seen.

"'T is my last," said he to Praxedis, laughingly.

The duchess gave it to the child.

"Go forth, then! and the Lord be with thee; it is a dispensation!"

All were deeply touched, and Ekkehard laid his hands on Hadumoth's head as if to bless her. "I thank you!" said she, and started to go; then once more she turned round.

"But if they will not let me have Audifax for the one gold-piece?"

"Then I will give thee another," said the duchess.

Whereupon the child walked confidently away.

And Hadumoth went out into the unknown world with the gold-piece sewed into her bodice, her pocket

filled with bread, and the staff which Audifax had once cut for her from the dark-green holly-bush. That she knew not the way, that food and shelter were doubtful things, she had no time to trouble herself about. The Huns have gone toward the setting sun, and have taken him with them, was her sole thought; the flowing Rhine and the sunset were her waymarks, and Audifax her goal.

The scenery gradually became strange to her; the Bodensee gleamed smaller and narrower in the distance; new mountains arose before her, and began to hide the familiar proud shape of her native crag. Then she looked back again and again. For one last time the summit of the Hohentwiel, with its walls and towers swimming in azure haze, greeted her eyes; then it vanished. An unknown valley opened before her; a wide sweep of dark fir forests shut it in on every side; under the black shades, low, straw-thatched cottages lay hidden. Waving a last farewell to the mountains of the Hegau, Hadumoth undauntedly walked on.

When the sun had gone down to his rest behind the pine woods, she stopped a while.

"Now they are ringing the bell for evening prayer at home," said she. "I too will pray."

And she knelt down in the mountain solitude and prayed, first for Audifax, then for the duchess, and finally for herself. All was silent around her. She heard only the throbbing of her own heart.

"What will become of my poor geese?" she wondered, as she rose from her knees; "now 't is the hour to drive them home."

Then to her mind again came the vision of Audi-fax, at whose side she had so often returned home from the pasture, and she hurried on.

In the farm-yards in the valley not a soul was stirring. Only before one little straw-thatched cottage an old woman was sitting.

"Thou must take me in for the night, grandmother," said Hadumoth, confidently. The old woman made no answer, except by a sign that she could remain. She was deaf, and when the rest of her people had fled up into the mountains on account of the Huns, she alone had remained behind.

Before the early gray dawn of day, Hadumoth was on her way again. And she walked on and on through long, long forests, where it seemed as if the fir-trees would never come to an end. And the first gentle stirrings of spring were in the trees, the first flowers were peeping out from the moss, the first beetles flew by, softly humming, and the strong delicious resinous smell was wafted through the air as if it were an incense which the fir-trees sent up to the sun to show their gratitude for all the jocund life which his rays had called forth around them.

It did not please the shepherdess.

"It is far too beautiful here," said she, to herself; "the Huns would not be here."

She turned her steps away from the mountains, and came to a place where the forest was not so dense and there was a wide view. Far down in the distance the Rhine wound along in curves like a serpent. Compressed between its dividing arms was an island, bearing many a stately tower and wall,

apparently of a church and a monastery; but Hadumoth's sharp eyes discerned that the walls were blackened and spotted, and the roofs were all destroyed. A blue cloud of smoke hung heavily over it.

"How do they call the land here?" asked she of a man who came out of the wood.

"Black Forest," was the answer.

"And over there?"

"Rheinau."

"The Huns have been there?"

"Day before yesterday."

"Where are they now?"

The man leaning on his staff gave a sharp look at the child. He pointed down the Rhine. "Why?" asked he.

"I wish to go to them."

He lifted his staff and went his way.

"St. Fintan pray for us!" he murmured.

And Hadumoth once more pressed on unweariedly. She had noticed from the height that the Rhine flowed onwards in great bends; so she cut across the mountains, in order to get the start of the Huns. Two days she thus spent, sleeping at night in the woods on the mossy ground, and scarcely meeting a human being all the time. But she had to cross many wild ravines and brawling torrents, and old tree-trunks which the storm had uprooted. On the very place where they had once stretched their lofty tops toward the sky, they now lay in decay, and shone with an uncanny pallid gray light in the darkness. Not once did she lose her courage.

The mountains became less steep, and flattened down into an elevated plain, across which rough gusts of wind often swept; and the snow lay in the crevices;—yet she pushed on.

Her last piece of bread had been eaten, when she came to a mountain ridge and again caught sight of the Rhine in the distance. She now wished to walk toward it; but just beyond the mountain a narrow chasm opened like a rent in the earth, and a mountain brook went foaming down its depths. A dense growth of underbrush and brambles and blackberry vines beset the steep descent; she forced her way through them. It cost pain and weariness: the sun was high in the heavens; the thorns caught her dress. When her feet seemed reluctant to move, she said, “Audifax!” and compelled them to go on again.

Now she was at the bottom, at the base of dark rock-walls. The torrent had made a passage for itself through them, and fell in a bright, sparkling cascade. The weather-beaten boulders glistened in the spray; a reddish moss grew on them and made them seem as if gilded; the stream lapped up against them, and now and again rose till it flowed noisily over them, until, a few steps lower down, it paused and rested in a dark-green transparent pool, like a weary man who looks back and considers himself and the follies of his past life. Luxurious, broad-leaved plants grew around it; the bubbles of foam floated on it like sparkling dew-drops. Blue-winged dragon-flies hovered above them, as if they were the spirits of dead fairies.

Dreamily the monotonous rushing of the brook found its echo in the heart of the hungry child. With that brook she was to go on down to the Rhine! Everything was wild and entangled, as if never a human being had set foot there. . . . And now a dry, green little nook smiled invitingly over at Hadumoth; she threw herself down. It sounded so cool and soothing, it lulled her to sleep. With right arm stretched out, so that her head rested on it, she lay there, a smile on her tired face. She was dreaming. Of whom? — The blue dragonflies betrayed nothing . . .

A slight sprinkling of water from a hollow hand startled her from her dreams; as she slowly opened her eyes a long-bearded man in a coarse linen coat, and with legs bare over the knees, stood before her. A fishing-rod, a net, and a wooden tub in which blue-spotted trout were swimming, lay in the grass near him. He had for a considerable time watched the little sleeper; and, doubting whether she were a human child, he went to get some water and awoke her.

“Where am I?” asked Hadumoth, fearlessly.

“At the falls of Wieladingen,” replied the fisherman. “The brook is the Murg, and it has fine trout, and it runs into the Rhine. But how comest thou in the woods, little maiden? Hast thou dropt from the sky?”

“I come from far away: where I live the mountains are different, and grow alone and steep out of the plain, — each one standing by itself; and the trout swim in the lake, and are bigger. Hegau, the people call it.”

The fisherman shook his head. "That must be a good way off. And whither now?"

"Where the Huns are," replied Hadumoth; and she told him frankly why she had gone out into the world, and for whom she was searching.

Then the fisherman shook his head more vigorously than before. "By the life of my mother!" exclaimed he, "that is a hard step!"

But Hadumoth folded her hands and said:—

"Fisherman, thou must show me the way to find them."

Then the long-bearded man was touched.

"If it must be so, come along," he grumbled. "They are not very far off."

He gathered up his fishing-tackle and went with the little maiden down the bed of the brook. Whenever the trees and bushes became too dense, or when heaps of bowlders blocked the way, he took her up in his arms, and carried her through the foaming water. After a while they left the ravine to their right and stood on a spur of the mountains that slope down to the Rhine.

"Look there, child," said he, pointing across the river to where a low level mountain chain stretched along. "Over yonder the road leads into the Frickthal toward the Bötzing. They have pitched their camp there. Yesterday the castle of Laufenburg was burning . . . but farther than this the hellhounds shall not proceed," he added fiercely.

They walked on for a while; then Hadumoth's guide stopped before a projecting rock.

"Wait!" said he.

He gathered together some dry pine-logs and heaped them up with a quantity of brushwood and pitchy chips, but he left it unlighted. He did the same thing in other places. Hadumoth looked on. She knew not why he was doing this.

Then they descended to the banks of the Rhine.

"Art thou really in earnest about the Huns?" he asked once more.

"Yes," said Hadumoth.

So he unfastened a skiff concealed in the bushes, and rowed her across. On the other side it was woody. He went in for a little distance and looked carefully about. Here also was a wood-pile, with pine torches all covered with green branches. He nodded with satisfaction and turned to Hadumoth.

"Farther than this I will not accompany thee; yonder is the Frickthal and the Hunnic camp. Have them give thee that boy at once; better to-day than to-morrow, else it may be too late. God protect thee! Thou art a brave girl."

"I thank thee," said Hadumoth, pressing his horny hand. "But why wilt thou not come with me?"

"I shall come later," replied the fisherman in a significant tone; and he got into his canoe again.

The Hunnic camp was at the entrance of the valley. There were a few tents, and a number of huts made of branches and straw. The horses were stabled in blockhouses of pine-logs. At the back was a mountain; in front they had dug a trench, fortified by an abatis of paling mixed with masses of rock,

after the Hunnic fashion.¹⁹⁰ Their outposts rode back and forth at a considerable distance. What kept them there for a while, was partly their need of rest after their long ride and battles, and partly a contemplated attack on the neighboring convent of St. Fridolin. Some of their men were building ships and rafts on the banks of the Rhine.

In his tent lay Hornebog, who was now sole leader since Ellak's death; rugs and cushions were heaped up, but he could find no rest. Erica the Flower-of-the-heath was sitting by his side, playing with a golden bawble which she wore on a silk ribbon round her neck.

"I know not why," said Hornebog to her, "but things have become very uncomfortable. Those bald-headed monks by the lake went at us too fiercely. We must act more cautiously.¹⁹¹ Here also I do not feel quite at ease; it is too still; a calm precedes a storm. With thee, too, everything is changed since they killed Ellak. Thou shouldst love me, now, as thou didst him, when he was the first; but thou art like a burnt-out fire."

Erica dashed away the jewel, so that it flew back on her bosom with a thud, and softly hummed some Hunnic melody.

Just then one of the Hunnic sentinels entered, accompanied by Hadumoth, and Snewelin of Ellwangen as interpreter. The girl had made her way into the camp, intrepidly passing the out-posts and their calls, until they stopped her.

Snewelin explained Hadumoth's wish with regard to the boy prisoner. He was in a soft and compas-

sionate frame of mind, as if he were still in his home, and about to celebrate Ash-Wednesday; for on that very day he had summed up all the misdeeds which he had committed in the course of his Hunnic life, and the pillaged monasteries began to weigh heavily on his conscience.

"Tell him also that I can pay a ransom," said Hadumoth, undoing the seam of her bodice, where the gold-piece was. She handed it to the chieftain, who laughed; Erica also laughed.

"What a crazy land!" exclaimed Hornebog. "The men cut off their hair, and the children do what would honor a warrior. If instead of this little maiden, the armed men from the lake had followed us, it might have put us into an awkward position."

He looked suspiciously at the child.

"If she were a spy!" . . . he exclaimed. But Erica now rose, and stroked Hadumoth's brow.

"Thou shalt stay with me," said she, "for I want something to play with, since my black horse is dead and my Ellak is dead." . . .

"Take the brat away!" cried Hornebog, angrily. "Are we on the Rhine to play with shepherd girls?"

Then Erica saw that a storm was brewing in the chieftain's bosom; she took the little maiden by the hand and led her out.

Where the camp stretched along on the mountain side, a temporary kitchen had been arranged between some slabs of rock. Here the Forest woman reigned. Audifax was kneeling before the biggest of the kettles, and blowing the fire over which the

soup for the evening meal was boiling. Now he jumped up and gave a loud cry ; he had caught sight of his little friend.

But the old hag stretched out her head from behind the other kettle ; that was more than a warning. He stood motionless, seized a peeled branch and stirred the soup, as was his prescribed task. He was the picture of dumb grief ; he had become pale and haggard ; his eyes were dimmed by tears, which had roused no sympathy in any one.

“See that thou dost not hurt the children, old baboon !” cried Erica.

Then Hadumoth went over to where the shepherd boy was. He dropped his primitive spoon, and silently held out his hand to her ; but out of his deep dark eyes there flashed a look which told a mighty story of captivity, endurance, and the longing wish to regain his liberty. Hadumoth likewise stood motionless before him. She had been looking forward with the keenest anticipation to the moment of meeting ; but it was all so different. The greatest joy sends its exultation up to heaven in a voiceless song.

“Give me a dish of soup, Audifax,” said she. “I am hungry.”

The Forest woman suffered him to fill a wooden plate for her with soup. The hungry child renewed her strength with it, and her spirits rose, and she fearlessly gazed on the wild faces of the Hunnic riders, who came to get their soup.

Afterwards she sat down close beside Audifax. He was silent and reserved ; only when it became

dark and his tyrant went away, the fetters of his tongue became loosened.

“Oh, I have so much to tell thee, Hadumoth!” he said in a whisper. “I know where the treasure of the Huns is! The Forest hag has it in her keeping. Two big boxes stand under her couch, in yonder hut. I have looked into them myself, and they are full of jewels and diadems and golden trinkets. A silver hen, with a brood of chickens, and eggs, is also amongst them, which they stole in Lombardy, — and many more beautiful things. I had to pay dearly for seeing them, though . . .”

He lifted up his leathern hat. His right ear was half cut off.

“ . . . The old Forest hag came home before I could close the lid again. ‘Take that for thy reward,’ said she, and snapped her scissors at my ear. It hurt me, Hadumoth; but I’ll pay her back!”

“I will help thee,” said his companion.

For a long time the two happy children whispered together; no sleep came to their eyes. The noise in the camp was hushed, the shadows of night brooded over the valley. Then Hadumoth said:

“It seems to me all the time that it is that night when the stars fell down.”

Audifax sighed.

“I shall still get my treasure,” said he. “I know I shall.”

And again they sat for a while: suddenly Audifax gave a violent start. Hadumoth could feel the trembling of his hand.

On the other side of the Rhine, on the dark

mountain summit, a fire signal flashed. It was a torch which some man swung round and round, and then threw away.

"There, it's gone!" said Audifax, softly.

"But look there!" affrightedly exclaimed Hadumoth, pointing behind her.

From the height of the Bötzenberg, another flame darted up, and described a fiery circuit in the air. It was the same signal. And yonder, high up over the Black Forest, in the same place where the burning torch had first been swung, rose a mighty flame, lighting the dark, starless night.

The guard in the valley uttered a piercing whistle; the camp began to stir. The Forest woman came back, and cried threateningly:—

"What art thou dreaming about, boy? Harness our team, and saddle the pack-horse!"

Audifax silently obeyed.

The cart stood ready, and the pack-horse was tied to a stake. Cautiously the old woman approached it and hung two panniers over its back; then she brought out two boxes, which she put in them, and covered them up with hay. She peered out anxiously into the darkness. Everything was quiet again. The Frickthaler wine had insured the Huns a sound sleep.

"'T is nothing," muttered the Forest woman; "we can take the horses back again;" but the next moment she started up as if blinded. The mountain commanding the camp had suddenly become alive; it flashed and lightened with hundreds of torches and fire-brands,¹⁹² and thundered from all sides

with the furious battle-cry. From the Rhine dark masses came rushing; on all the mountain summits tremendous bonfires were burning.

Up now, ye sleepers! . . .

It was too late! already the fire-brands were flying into the Hunnic camp. Pitifully resounded the neighing of the horses, — their large shed was already in flames. Dark figures are storming the camp. To-day Death comes in a blaze of torches, and he who brings him is the old Irminger, the owner of the Frickgau, he, the strong father of six strong sons, who like Mattathias with his Maccabees could no longer bear to behold the misery of his people. And with them come the men of Hornussen and Herznach, and those from the Aarthal and Brugg, as well as from Baden's hot springs, and far away from the Gieselafueh.

Safely hidden in the dark forest, they had waited until the torch was waved on the Eggberg, assuring them of the neighborly help of the Black Forest; then they rushed to the attack. With a horrible din the yell of the surprised Huns clashed with the invaders' shouts of victory.

With bleeding head Snewelin galloped past. A well-aimed fire-brand had stuck to his garments and set them all ablaze, so that he looked like a fiery phantom.

"The world is coming to an end," he cried. "The millennium is at hand! Lord have mercy on my poor soul!"

"Lost, all is lost," muttered the Forest woman, lifting her hand to her forehead. Then she untied

the pack-horse, to harness it likewise before her cart.

Audifax stood in the dark, clutching his teeth that he might not scream his delight out into the tumult of the attack. A trembling reflection of the flames played on his face. It was boiling within him. For a while he stared at the running and the surging and the fighting of the dark figures before him.

"Now I know what to do," he whispered to Hadumoth.

He had picked up a big stone; with the agility of a wild-cat he sprang up at the Forest woman and struck her down, tore away the pack-horse, and, with the strength of a man, placed on it the kneeling Hadumoth. "Cling to the pommel!" he cried. He leaped on the horse and seized the reins. The animal felt the unwonted rider and galloped off into the night, frightened by the glare and noise around.

Audifax kept his presence of mind, though his heart throbbed wildly. The blinding smoke made him shut his eyes, and thus they sped onward over the corpses of the dead, and through the crowds of contending men. . . . After a while the noise became fainter in the distance, the horse began to slacken its pace. It was taking the children toward the Rhine, — they were saved!

And they rode on through the long dark night, nor looked back. Audifax silently held the reins; it seemed to him as if it were all a dream. He put his left hand on Hadumoth's head, and tapped on one of the boxes in the pannier. It gave a metallic

ring, and then he knew that he was not dreaming. And the horse was gallant, and willingly carried its burden across fields, over heaths, and through dark woods, always toward the rushing Rhine.

When they had ridden on long and far, there came a cool breeze, which made them shiver. It was the herald of the morning.¹⁹³ Hadumoth opened her eyes.

“Where are we?” she asked.

“I don’t know,” replied Audifax.

Now they began to hear a roaring and rushing like distant thunder, but it was not from a coming storm; the sky brightened, the little stars grew pale, and vanished. The thunder became louder and nearer. They rode past a castle looking down proudly into the waters below. Then their path took them round a mountain slope, and then suddenly came into sight the broad stream of the Rhine dashing and splashing and crashing down with noise and bubbling foam over dark corroded crags.¹⁹⁴ Pearly spray drifted sprinkling through the air. Everything was wet with soft mist. . . .

The horse stopped as if it wanted at its leisure to take in the full effect of the mighty spectacle. Audifax jumped off, lifted down the weary Hadumoth, set the two baskets on the ground, and allowed the brave animal to graze.

And the two children stood before the falls of the Rhine; Hadumoth held her companion’s right hand with her left; long and silently they gazed. And the sun cast his first rays on the plunging stream, which caught them and built them up into a many-

colored rainbow and played with the iridescent light. . . .

Then Audifax went to the baskets, took out one of the boxes and opened it. It contained nothing but gold and jewels. The treasure long coveted was found at last; and it was his own, not through spells and midnight incantations, but by the use of his hands and by seizing the favorable opportunity. He gazed on the glittering baubles. It caused him no surprise; he had known for many months that such a treasure was destined for him. . . .

Of every kind of article it contained he picked out one, — one casket, one ring, one coin, and one bracelet, — and brought them to the brink of the waters.

“Hadumoth,” said he, “here God must be; his rainbow hovers over the waters. I will make him a thank-offering.”

He stepped on a bowlder at the brink of the river, and flung into the roaring current with a strong hand the casket and the ring and the coin and the bracelet; then he knelt down, and Hadumoth knelt by his side and they prayed for a long time, and thanked God. . . .

CHAPTER XVI.

CAPPAN GETS MARRIED.

WHEN a thunder-storm is past, the brooks still run roily and earth-colored. In the same way a land-shaking convulsion is generally followed by a time of petty annoying details until the old routine is restored.

Frau Hadwig also was obliged to undergo this experience.

There was a great deal to change and arrange after the driving away of the Huns. She undertook it willingly enough, as her versatile mind and the pleasure she felt in active management lightened the labor of sovereignty.

The widows and orphans of the slain *arrière-ban*-men, as well as all those on the roofs of whose cottages the red cock had flown, — in other words, whose homes had been burnt, and whose harvests had been destroyed by the horses' trampling hoofs, — came to her. Help was given so far as it was possible. Messengers were sent off to the emperor, to report what had happened and to propose future defence. Wherever the fortress was found deficient it was strengthened; the booty was inventoried and distributed, and the erection of a chapel on the grave of the Christian warriors was decided upon.

With Reichenau and St. Gall, there was much business to transact; our ecclesiastical friends never forget to present their bills for the services they have rendered. They well knew how to bemoan and bewail the damages done to their monasteries and the great loss of goods and chattels which they had experienced; and every day some hint was dropped within the duchess's hearing that a donation of land would be most desirable for the afflicted servants of God.

Far away in the Rhine valley, where the Breisach mountain, with its dark scorched crags, narrows the bed of the river, the duchess owned the domain of Saspach.¹⁹⁵ On a volcanic soil the vine thrives, — so this would admirably suit the pious brothers of the Reichenau, if it were only to show them the difference between the Rhine wine and that which was made near the lake, besides its being some slight compensation for their valiant services, and for the necessary masses for the souls of the dead.

And as Frau Hadwig one day had not appeared quite disinclined to make the donation, early the next morning the subprior came up on horseback and brought a great parchment with him, on which was written down the whole formula of the donation. It really sounded very well, — how everything was to be given to St. Pirminius: house and yard with all that therein was; cultivated and uncultivated land, woods and vineyards, meadows and water-courses and pasturage, with mill privileges and rights of fishing, and whatever vassals, male and female, were living there. . . . Even the customary curse was not wanting; it ran as follows: —

*If any one shall dare to impugn the donation, or deprive the monastery of it, the Anathema Māranatha shall be pronounced on him. May the wrath of the Almighty and of all the holy angels fall on him. May he be stricken with leprosy, like Naaman the Syrian, with epilepsy and death like Ananias and Sapphira, and let him pay a pound of gold to the exchequer in expiation of his crime.*¹⁹⁶

“The abbot was anxious to save our gracious sovereign the trouble of drawing up the deed of gift herself,” said the subprior. “Blanks have been left for filling in the name and boundaries of the property, for adding the signatures of the parties and the witnesses, and for attaching the seals.”

“Have you learned to be so spry in all your doings?” replied Frau Hadwig. “I will look at that parchment of yours at some convenient time.”

“The abbot would regard it as a kind and desirable thing, if I could bring him back this very day the deed signed and sealed by you. It is on account of uniformity in the monastery archives, the abbot said.”

Frau Hadwig looked at the man from head to foot.

“Tell your abbot,” she said, “that I am just now having an estimate made of how much the quartering of the brothers on the Hohentwiel cost me in kitchen and cellar. Tell him moreover that we have our own scribes, if we should feel inclined to give away landed property on the Rhine, and that . . .”

Other bitter words were on the end of her tongue, but the subprior interrupted her soothingly, and was

going to tell her a number of cases where enlightened kings and princes had done the same, — how the King of France, for instance, had generously indemnified St. Martin of Tours for the losses which he had suffered through the Norman invasion, and how beneficial the donation had been for the giver's soul; for as fire is extinguished by water, so sins by alms-giving. . . .

But the duchess turned her back on him, and left him standing there in the hall with his examples yet untold.

“Too much zeal is an evil thing,” muttered the monk; “‘the more haste, the less speed.’”

Frau Hadwig turned round once more. The gesture with which she spoke was indescribable, —

“If you wish to go, go at once!”

So he made his retreat.

On the very same day, to annoy the abbot, she sent a golden chain to the gray-haired Simon Bardo in acknowledgment of his successful leadership.

The fate of Cappan, the captured Hun, was a matter of special interest to the duchess.

At first he had spent some anxious days. Even now it was not clear to him why his life had been spared; he walked shyly about, like one who has no just claim to himself; and when he slumbered on his couch of straw, delightful dreams came to him. Then he saw large flowery plains on which numberless gallows were growing like thistles, and on every one of them hung one of his countrymen, and on the highest of all he himself hung; and he could find no

fault with this, as it was the usual fate allotted to prisoners of war in those days.¹⁹⁷

But no gallows was erected for him. For some time he still glanced suspiciously at the linden-tree in the courtyard: it had a strong, leafless branch; and he often fancied that this branch beckoned to him, saying, "Hei! how well thou wouldst adorn me!"

Gradually, however, he found that the linden was a fine shady tree, and he became less timid. His wounded leg was healed, and he wandered about in yard and kitchen, looking on with mute astonishment at the doings of a German household. It is true he still thought in Hunnish that a man's home should be the back of his horse, and that a hide-covered cart sufficed for wife and child; but when it rained, or the evenings were cool, the hearth-fire and the four walls seemed to him not altogether despicable, wine tasted better than mare's milk, and a woollen jacket felt softer than a wolf's skin. So his wish to escape dwindled away, and homesickness could not attack him, as a home was an unknown luxury to him.

At that time a maid named Friderun had charge of courtyard and garden; and she was as tall as a many-storied building with a pointed roof, for her head had the shape of a pear, and she no longer shone in the first freshness of youth: when she opened her broad mouth for speech or laughter, one long tooth stuck out, as a sign-post of advancing age. Evil tongues whispered that she had once been Herr Spazzo's mistress, but that was long ago;

for many years her favor had been bestowed on a herdsman whom the Huns had killed in the ranks of the *arrière-ban*, — and so her heart was orphaned.

Tall people are good-natured, and do not suffer under the evil consequences of too much thinking. So she cast her eyes on the Hun, who was wandering about all alone in the courtyard; and her compassionate heart fastened on him, like a sparkling dewdrop on a toadstool. She tried to instruct him in all the arts which she herself practised; and when she was weeding and grubbing in the garden, it came to pass that she would give the hoe to Cappan, and he would do what he had seen his instructress do.

In the same way he followed her example when he saw her gathering beans or herbs; and after a few days, when water was to be fetched, the slender Friderun had only to point at the wooden pail, to make Cappan take it up on his head and walk with it down to the splashing fountain in the court.

Only in the kitchen they took no delight in the docile pupil's achievements; for one day when a piece of game was intrusted to him to beat tender with a wooden maul, old memories arose in his mind, and he devoured part of it raw, along with the onions and leek which had been prepared for seasoning the meat.

“I believe my prisoner pleases thee,” Herr Spazzo called out one morning to her, when the Hun was busily engaged in splitting wood. A deep blush covered the tall woman's cheeks. She cast down her eyes. “If the boy could only speak German,

and were not a damned heathen . . ." continued Herr Spazzo.

The slender creature was too bashful to speak.

"I know thou deservest to be made happy, Friderun," Herr Spazzo began again.

Then Friderun's tongue was loosened.

"With regard to the speaking of German," said she, still looking down, "I really should not mind that so much; and even if he is a heathen, he need not remain one. But . . ."

"But what?"

"He can not sit down like a reasonable man when he eats. If he is to enjoy his meals, he always lies flat on the ground."

"A spouse like thee would soon cure him of that. Hast thou already come to an understanding with him?"

Friderun was silent again. Suddenly she ran away like a frightened deer, her wooden shoes clattering over the stone flags.

Herr Spazzo then walked up to Capan, who was still splitting wood, and, clapping him on the back to make him look up, he pointed with his forefinger at the flying Friderun, nodded his head interrogatively, and looked at him sharply.

The Hun pressed his right arm to his breast, bowed his head, then gave a mighty leap in the air, so that he spun round like the terrestrial globe on its axis, and stretched his mouth into a joyous grin.

Then Herr Spazzo understood how it was with both of them.¹⁹⁸

Friderun had not witnessed the Hun's summer-

sault. Doubts still weighed on her soul ; so she went out of the castle-gate and plucked a wild flower, and there she was now pulling off the white petals, one after the other : —

“ He loves me, loves me not, he loves me.”

When all of them except the last had become the sport of the winds, her muttering ceased ; she looked with beaming eyes ¹⁹⁹ at the stalk with its one little white leaf, and with a smile of satisfaction nodded her head at it.

Meanwhile Spazzo the chamberlain expounded his prisoner's case to the duchess, and her active mind took up the idea of at once settling Cappan's fate. The Hun had given many proofs of praiseworthy skill in the garden. He knew how to stop the cunning subterranean digging of the moles. With bent willow-boughs, at the end of which a noose was fastened, he had contrived an untimely end for many of the black little creatures. At one and the same instant they were jerked up to sunlight, gallows, and death. He also manufactured excellent mouse-traps out of wire ; in short, he showed himself an able huntsman in all that regarded the lower and the lowest kind of sport.

“ We will give him a few acres of land over yonder on the Stofflerberg,” said Frau Hadwig, “ and in return he can wage war against all obnoxious and injurious animals, so far as our land and jurisdiction go ; and if the tall Friderun likes him, she may have him ; it is very dubious whether any other of the maidens of this land has cast loving eyes on him.”

She bade Ekkehard prepare the prisoner so that, renouncing his heathenish ways, he might be received into the Christian community. He shook his head rather doubtfully, but Frau Hadwig added: "The good will must here make up for what is lacking in the understanding. You can make your lesson short; no doubt he will understand as much as the Saxons did whom the great Emperor Karl commanded to be driven into the Weser."

Ekkehard did as he was told, and his instruction fell on good soil. Cappan had picked up many a German word in his warlike expeditions, and, like all his countrymen, had a great talent for guessing what was required of him even when the words had not been quite understood. Signs and tokens also helped a good deal; when Ekkehard sat before him with the open Bible illuminated with golden initials and pointed heavenwards, the Hun knew of what he was speaking. The likeness of the devil he also understood, and indicated by gestures that he was to be abhorred, and before the sign of the cross he fell on his knees as he had seen others do. Thus the instruction throve.

So far as Cappan was able to express himself, it became evident that his past life had really been very bad. He nodded in the affirmative when asked whether he had taken pleasure in the destruction of churches and monasteries; and from the number of his outstretched fingers, he let it be seen that he had more than once taken part in such sacrilege.

With evident signs of sincere repentance, he confessed to having once eaten part of a slain priest's

heart, in order to cure himself of fever.²⁰⁰ In expiation, he now diligently learned to express his guilt; if a word failed him, Friderun helped him, and soon Ekkehard was able to declare himself satisfied, even though his pupil's mind certainly had not yet taken in all that the Church Father St. Augustine requires in his book on the teaching of those infirm in the faith.

So the day was fixed upon for both baptism and wedding. According to the duchess's desire, he was to have three godfathers, — one from the monastery of Reichenau, one from St. Gall, and a third from the *arrière-ban*, in remembrance of the battle in which he had been taken prisoner.

The Reichenauers sent Rudimann the cellarer; the *arrière-ban* was represented by Herr Spazzo; and as the godfathers could not come to an agreement whether the convert should be called Pirminius in honor of the Reichenau, or Gallus, they brought the case before the duchess, to abide by her decision. She said, —

“Call him Paulus, for he also has gone out breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, until the scales were taken from his eyes.”

It was on a Saturday when Cappan, who had fasted during the whole day, was led by the godfathers into the castle-chapel; there they took turns in spending the night with him in prayer. The Hun was submissive and devout, and behaved with solemn propriety. He believed that the spirit of his mother, dressed in lamb-skins, had appeared to him, saying:

*Thy bow is sadly broken !
Poor little horseman, bow
Beneath the yoke in token
Thy captors own thee now !*

Early on Sunday morning, when the pearly dew-drops were still hanging on the grass, and the first lark was soaring up to the bright blue sky, a small troop, bearing a cross and flag, marched down the hill, — this time no funeral train !

Ekkehard in front, in a violet priestly garment, the Hun between his two godfathers, they walked through the luxurious meadow-lands, down to the shores of the little river Aach. There they stuck the cross into the white sand, and formed a semi-circle round him who for the last time was to be called Cappan. Through the morning silence rang the clear notes of the litany mounting up to God, that he might look down graciously on the man who was now bending his head before him, longing for deliverance from the yoke of heathendom and sin.

Then they told him to undress down to the belt. He knelt on the sand. Ekkehard pronounced the exorcism over him, in the name of him whom angels and archangels adore, before whom the heavens and earth tremble and abysses open. Might the Evil One from henceforth lose all power over him ! He then breathed three times over him, and putting some consecrated salt into his mouth, as a symbol of new wisdom and new thoughts, he anointed his forehead and breast with holy oil.

The Hun was perfectly awed, and scarcely dared to breathe, so deeply did the solemnity of the ceremony

impress him ; and when Ekkehard asked him, in the words of the prescribed formula, " Dost thou renounce the Devil and all his works and doings ? " he replied with a clear voice, " I renounce him ! " and he repeated the words of the creed as well as he could. Whereupon Ekkehard immersed him in the cool water of the river ; the baptism was pronounced, and the new Paulus rose from the waters. . . .

One melancholy look he cast at the fresh grave-mound at the border of the wood ; then his god-fathers drew him out, and wrapped his trembling form in a dazzling white linen garment. Proudly he stood amongst his new brothers. Ekkehard then preached a short sermon, on the text, " He is blessed who taketh good care of his garments, so that he shall not be found naked,"²⁰¹ and exhorted him henceforth to wear this spotless linen, in sign of his regeneration from sin to godliness, wrought in him by baptism ; finally he laid both hands on his head. With loud-sounding jubilant hymns, they led back the new Christian to the castle.

In the arched window embrasure in one of the basement chambers, the tall Friderun had been sitting meanwhile. Praxedis glided about her like an unstable will-o'-the-wisp. She had obtained the duchess's permission to array the awkward bride on this her day of honor. Her hair was already entwined with red ribbons ; the apron with its endless abundance of folds fell down to the high-heeled shoes. Over this was fastened the dark belt with its gilt clasp, — only he who wins the bride may unfasten it, — and now Praxedis took up the glittering

crown bedecked with colored glass beads and tinsel gold.

"Holy mother of God," she exclaimed, "must this also be put on? Friderun, if thou walkest along in that head-gear, they in the distance will believe that some tower has sprung into life and is going to be wedded."

"It must be," said Friderun.

"And why must it be?" demanded the Greek girl. "At home I have seen many a smart bride who wore the myrtle wreath or the silver-green olive branch in her locks, and it was good so. To be sure, no myrtle grows in these dark, dirty, gloomy fir-woods of yours, nor olive either; but ivy would be pretty also, would n't it, Friderun?"

But she turned round angrily on her chair.

"Rather not marry at all than go to church with leaves and grass in my hair," she replied. "That may do well enough for you foreigners, but when a Hegau maiden goes to her wedding, the *Schappel-crown* must adorn her head. Thus it has always been, ever since the Rhine flowed through the Bodensee and the mountains have stood here. We Suebians are a royal race, as my father always said."

"Your will be done," said Praxedis, fastening the spangled crown on her head.

The tall bride arose; but a frown had gathered on her brow, like the shadow of a fleeting cloud that throws a fleeting darkness on a sunny plain.

"Wilt thou weep now already, so that the tears may be spared thee in wedlock?" asked the Greek girl.

Friderun put on a serious face, and the homely mouth assumed a very sorrowful expression, so that Praxedis had some difficulty in restraining a laugh.

“I feel so depressed,” said the Hun’s bride.

“And what depresses thee, future rival of the pine-trees on the Stofferberg?”

“I am afraid that the young men will play me some trick because I marry the foreigner. When the farmer of the Schlangenhof brought home the old widow from the Bregenz Forest, they went to his house on the wedding-night, and with bull’s horns and brass kettles and sea-shells made a terrible noise as if a hail-storm was to be frightened away; and when the miller of Rielasingen came out of the house on the first morning after his marriage, they had put a dry and withered May-pole before his door, and, instead of flowers and ribbons, a wisp of straw and a ragged green apron hung from it.”

“Be sensible,” said Praxedis, soothingly.

But Friderun went on lamenting, —

“And what if they should treat me like the game-keeper’s widow when she married the apprentice boy? During the night her roof was cut in twain along the ridge-pole, so that one half fell to the right and one to the left; and the blue sky shone down into their marriage-bed without their knowing why, and the rooks flew about their heads.”²⁰²

Praxedis laughed.

“I hope that thou hast a good conscience, Friderun?” said she, significantly.

But Friderun was now very nearly crying.

“And who knows,” said she, evasively, “what my Cappan . . .”

"Paulus," Praxedis corrected her.

". . . may have done in his younger days. Last night I dreamt that he held me close in his arms, when suddenly a Hunnic woman with yellow face and black hair came and tore him away. 'He is mine,' cried she; and when I would not let him go, she became a snake, and tightly coiled herself around him. . . ."

"Leave the snakes and Hunnic women now," interrupted Praxedis, "and get ready! They are already coming up the hill. . . . Don't forget the sprig of rosemary and the white handkerchief."

Cappan's white garment shone out brightly in the courtyard. So Friderun bade farewell to all foreboding thoughts, and walked out. The bridesmaids received her in the yard; the newly baptized welcomed her with a joyous grin; the chapel-bell rang out, and so they went to the wedding.²⁰³

The religious ceremony was over; with beaming faces the new couple walked out of the castle-yard. Friderun's kith and kin had come, — strong healthy-looking people, who as far as stature was concerned were not surpassed by the bride. They were tenants and yeomen on the neighboring farms, and had come to help in lighting the first fire on the new hearth at the foot of the Hohenstoffeln, and to take part in the wedding festivities.

Heading the procession was a cart decorated with garlands, and laden with the bride's outfit. The huge pine bedstead was not missing, with its headboard on which were painted roses and magic signs

to drive away night-mares, goblins, and other nightly sprites. Then came a great supply of boxes and trunks, containing the necessary household articles.

The bridesmaids carried the distaff, with the bundle of flax and the prettily adorned bridal broom of white birch twigs, — simple emblems of industry and order for the future household.

Loud shouts of joy and merriment were not wanting either, and Cappan felt as if the baptismal floods that morn had swept away all recollection of having ever leapt along and swept along on the back of a galloping horse. Decently and soberly he walked along with his new relations as if he had been from his youth up a bailiff or magistrate of Hegau.

Before the noise of the merry-makers going down the hill had died away, two nice-looking lads, the sons of the steward at the imperial castle of Bodmann, and Friderun's cousins, appeared before the duchess and her guests. They came to invite them to the wedding; each had a yellow primrose stuck behind his ear, and a nosegay in his button-hole.

Somewhat embarrassed, they stood at the entrance until the duchess beckoned to them, whereupon they approached a few steps nearer, then a few more, and, scraping a deep bow, spoke the old customary words of the invitation to their cousin's wedding feast, begging her to follow them over dale and over vale, over roads and moats, bridges and water, to the house of the wedding. There she would find some bread and vegetables, such as the good God had given, a tun would be tapped, and fiddles ringing, a dancing and singing, jumping and springing.

"We beseech you to accept two bad messengers for one good one. Blessed be Jesus Christ!" so their speech concluded; and without waiting for the answer, they scraped another bow, and hurried away.

"Shall we give the honor of our presence to our latest Christian subject?" gayly asked Frau Hadwig.

Her guests well knew that questions which she so graciously put must not be answered in the negative. So they all rode over in the afternoon. Rudimann, the ambassador from St. Pirmin's monastery, accompanied them; but he was silent and watchful. His account with Ekkehard had not yet been settled.

The Stoffler mountain, with its three basalt pinnacles bordered with stately pine-trees, looks proudly down over the land. The castles, the ruins of which now crown its summit, were not built then; only on the highest stood a deserted tower. Somewhat lower down, on a projection of the second peak, stood a modest little house, hidden among the trees. This was to be the domicile of the newly married pair. As a tribute and sign that the occupant was the duchess's vassal, it was decreed that he should furnish every year fifty moles' skins, and on St. Gallus day a live wren.

On a green clearing in the woods the wedding party had erected their camp. In large kettles and pans cooking and frying was going on; and he who could not get a dish or plate feasted off a wooden board; and where a fork was lacking, a double-pointed hazel-stick served in its place.

Cappan painfully took his place at table, and sat upright by the side of his spouse ; but in the depth of his mind he was revolving the thought whether, after some time, he might not resume his old custom of lying down during meal-times.

During the long intervals between the different courses — for the repast had begun at midday, and was to last until sunset — the Hun danced to relieve his limbs tortured by the continual sitting.

Welcomed by rustic music, the duchess came riding up. She looked down, still sitting on her horse, into the crowd of merry-makers ; then the new Paulus showed her his wild art. The music was not sufficient for him ; he shouted and whistled his own time as he wheeled his tall spouse about in a labyrinthine figure, — a walking tower and a wild-cat ; the slow one with the nimble ; now together, then apart ; now breast to breast, then back to back. Suddenly he thrust his partner away, and beating his wooden shoes together in the air, he turned seven summersaults, each higher than the other, and finally, dropping on his knees before Frau Hadwig, he bowed his head as if he would kiss the dust which her horse's hoofs had touched. This was the expression of his gratitude.

His Hegau cousins, at this extraordinary dancing, conceived a laudable desire of emulation. It is quite possible that later some of them may have had instruction from him ; for from the distant Middle Ages still rings down the legend of the *seven capers*, or the Hunnic *hop*, which as a variation from

the monotonous Suabian round-dances has since those days become customary as the crown of every festival. . .

“Where is Ekkehard?” asked the duchess, who, after getting down from her palfrey, had walked through the ranks of her subjects.

Praxedis pointed over to a shady spot, where a gigantic pine-tree lifted its dark-green top toward the sky. On its knotty, rugged roots sat the monk. The loud merriment and the throng of men and women oppressed his heart, he knew not why. So he had gone aside, and was dreamily gazing out over the woody hills at the faint Alpine distance.

It was one of those soft, balmy evenings such as Herr Burkart of Hohenvels enjoyed in later times from his huge tower on the lake; “when the air is tempered and mingled with sunshine.”²⁰⁴ The distance was shrouded in a soft glowing haze. He who has once looked down from those quiet mountain-tops, when, gloriously bright, the sun in the deep-blue sky is slowly sinking to his rest, and purple shadows fill the depths of the valleys, and melted gold outlines the snowy Alpine peaks, will feel the memory of it later within his dusky walls, ringing and singing in his heart as bewitchingly sweet as a song in the melting accents of the South.

But Ekkehard sat there grave and serious, his head resting on his right hand.

“He is no longer as he used to be,” said Frau Hadwig to the Greek girl.

“He is no longer as he used to be,” thoughtlessly repeated Praxedis. She was intently gazing at the

women of the Hegau and their holiday-garments and as she studied those high, stiff bodices and tun-like starched skirts, and their unspeakable awkwardness in dancing, she wondered whether the genius of good taste in despair had not left that land forever, — or whether his foot had ever entered it.

Frau Hadwig approached Ekkehard. He started up from his mossy seat as if he saw a ghost.

“All alone, and away from the merry-makers?” asked she. “What are you doing here?”

“I am thinking where real happiness may be found,” replied Ekkehard.

“Happiness?” repeated Frau Hadwig.

*“She comes from ninety miles away,
And never, never comes to stay,*

says the proverb. Does she pass you by?”

“Perhaps so,” said the monk, looking down at the moss. The music started up again, and the shouts of the dancers came floating over to them.

“Those yonder, who stamp the ground, and can express with their feet what stirs in their hearts, are happy,” continued he. “Perhaps one requires very little to be happy; but, above all,” — he pointed to the glittering summits of the Alps, — “there must be no prospect of heights which our feet may never reach.”

“I do not understand you,” coldly said the duchess; but her heart thought otherwise than her tongue. “And how fares your Vergil?” said she, changing the conversation. “During these past days of anxiety and warfare, dust and cobwebs must have settled on it.”

“He will always find a refuge in my heart,” said Ekkehard, “even if the parchment should decay. Only a few moments ago his lines in praise of agriculture passed through my mind. Yonder the little forest-shaded house, on the mountain slope below the dark fertile fields, and a newly wedded pair, going to earn their bread with hoe and plough from Mother Earth. With a feeling of envy, Vergil’s picture rose before me:—

*Quiet undisturbed, a life where fraud never enters,
Rich in manifold stores, and domains with wide-spreading acres,
Caverns and living lakes, and fresh, cool, Tempe-like valleys,
Loving of happy herds, and luxurious tree-shaded slumbers.”**

“You are clever in adapting his verses,” said Frau Hadwig; “but in your envy you have forgotten Cappan’s duties of catching moles, and the annoying field-mice. And then the joys of winter! when the snow rises like a wall up to the straw-thatched roof, so that daylight looks round in perplexity for a chink or crevice through which to creep into the house.” . . .

“Even such a trial I could endure. Vergil also knows how this may be done:—

*Oft on winter nights a man will sit by the firelight,
Busied till late in shaping with keen-edged iron his torches;
While his wife, with song consoling her arduous labor,
Draws the strident comb across the woof of her fabric.”†*

“His wife?” exclaimed the duchess, maliciously. “But if he has no wife?”

* Georgic. lib. ii. 467-470.

† Georgic. lib. i. 291-294.

From the other side arose a jubilant outburst of uproarious laughter. They had lifted their Hunnic cousin high upon a board, and were carrying him across the meadow, as they used to carry the newly-chosen king on his shield, in the olden days of election. He made some gleeful capers high in the air above their heads.

“And *may* not have a wife?” said Ekkehard, absently. His forehead was burning. He covered it with his right hand. Wherever he looked the sight pained him. Yonder, the loud joy of the wedding-guests; here the duchess, and in the distance the glittering mountains. An infinite sorrow filled his heart; but his lips remained closed.

“Be strong and silent,” he said to himself.

He was indeed no longer as he used to be. The undisturbed peace of his lonely cell had forsaken him. Battle and danger from the Huns had widened his thoughts; the signs of favor shown him by the duchess had called up a fierce conflict in his heart. In his waking hours and in dreams by night he was haunted by the vision of her as she stood before him, hanging the relic, her husband’s sword, round his neck; and in evil moments self-reproaches, misty and unexpressed, that he had received these gifts so silently, passed through his soul.

Frau Hadwig had no suspicion of what was stirring in his heart. She thought with greater indifference of him since she had been humiliated by his apparently not understanding her; but as often as she saw him again, with his noble brow clouded by grief, and with that mute appealing melancholy in his eyes, then the old game began afresh.

“If you take such delight in agricultural pursuits,” said she lightly, “I can easily help you. The abbot of Reichenau has provoked me by trying to wheedle me out of the pearl of my estates, as if it were a mere bread-crumble which one shakes down from the table-cloth without so much as looking at it!”

There was a rustling in the bushes, but they did not notice it. Something brown went creeping between the leaves.—Was it a fox or a monk’s garment?—

“I will appoint you steward of it,” continued Frau Hadwig. “Then you will have all the joy, the sight of which has made you melancholy to-day; and far more still. My Saspach lies gayly on the Rhine, and the old Kaiserstuhl boasts the honor of having been the first to bear the vine in all our lands. The people thereabouts are honest and good, though they speak a rather rough language.”

Ekkehard’s eyes still rested on the ground.

“I can also give you a description of your life there, though I have not Vergil’s talent for painting. Fancy that autumn has come. You have led a healthy life; rising with the sun and going to bed with the chickens,—and now vintage-time has arrived. From all the mountain sides men and maids are descending with baskets full of ripe grapes. You stand at the door looking on . . .”

Again there was a rustling in the bushes.

“ . . . and wondering how the wine will be and thinking whose health you are going to drink in it. The Vogesenwald looks across at you, as bright and blue as the peaks of the Alps do from here. Then

there is a noise of horses and carriages coming down from the top of the Breisach, a cloud of dust rises on the highway. You lift your head . . . now, Herr Ekkehard, whom do you see coming?"

Ekkehard had scarcely followed her recital. He shyly asked:—

"Who?"

"Who else but your sovereign, who will not give up her ducal right of examining her subjects' doings!"

"And then?" he asked once more.

"Then? then I shall gather information about how Herr Ekkehard has been fulfilling his duties; and they will all say, 'He is good and earnest; and if he would not think and brood so much, and not spend so much time poring over his parchments, we should like him better still.'" . . .

"And then?" asked he once more. His voice sounded strange.

"Then I shall say, in the words of Scripture: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of thy Lord!'"

Ekkehard stood there like one but half conscious. He lifted one arm, and let it fall again. A tear trembled in his eye. He was very unhappy.

. . . At the same time a man softly crept out from the bushes. As soon as he felt the grass again under his feet, he let his habit, which had been gathered up, drop down. He gave a significant look back at the two standing there, and nodded his head

like one who has made a discovery. He had certainly not gone into the bushes to gather violets.

The wedding-feast by stages of natural development had got to that point where a general chaos threatens. The mead was having its effect on the different minds. One hung his upper garment on a tree and showed an almost irresistible inclination to smash everything; another strove to embrace every one; a third, who remembered having culled many a kiss from Friderun's cheeks ten years before, sat gloomily at the table, where he had emptied many a goblet, and looking down at the ants swarming around his feet, said to himself:—

“Kling! klang! gloria! None of them is worth a straw.”

The two youths who had been so shame-faced in the morning when they came to invite the duchess, were now playing an Allemannic trick on their Hunnic kinsman. They had dragged a large linen sheet out of one of the wedding trunks, placed on it Cappan the unfortunate, and taking firm hold of the four corners, they jerked him up into the air so that he flew sky high 'like a lark.²⁰⁵ He took this treatment as a mark of friendship and respect, customary in those parts, and adroitly accommodated himself to the motion up and down.

Suddenly the tall Friderun gave a loud shriek. All heads turned round; the two cousins almost let their victim fall back on the cool ground; a shout of delight broke forth, so wild and uproarious that it seemed as if even the old basalt crags in the pine-

wood looked down in surprise, and yet they had heard many a frightful tumult of storm and tempest.

There came Audifax and Hadumoth on their way back from the Huns! Audifax was leading the horse that carried the treasure-boxes; with beaming faces the two children walked side by side. That day they had once more beheld the top of the Hohentwiel, and had greeted it with a shout of delight.

“Don’t tell them everything,” whispered Audifax, putting long willow-branches over the panniers.

Friderun was the first who ran to meet them; and she almost lifted Hadumoth in her arms as she brought her back.

“Welcome, lost laddie! Drink, bagpiper, drink, my boy!” they cried on all sides to Audifax; for every one knew of his captivity, and the huge stone jugs were held out in sign of welcome.

The children had agreed together on the road, in what way they should accost the duchess when they came home.

“We must thank her prettily,” Hadumoth had said. “And I must give her back the gold Thaler. I shall tell her I got Audifax for nothing.”

“Yes,” Audifax had replied; “and we will add to it two more of the biggest gold coins that we got from the Huns, and present them to her, begging her to be kind to us as before. That shall be our thanks, and the fine for my having slain the Forest woman.”

So they had the gold all ready.

They now caught sight of the duchess standing with Ekkehard under the pine-tree; their agricultural conversation had been interrupted by the wild

burst of joy. Praxedis came bounding along to impart the wondrous news; now came the two youthful runaways themselves, walking hand in hand. They knelt before Frau Hadwig; Hadumoth held up her Thaler, and Audifax his two big gold coins. He tried to speak, but his voice failed him. . . .

Then Frau Hadwig with lofty grace turned to those present:—

“The silliness of my two young subjects affords me an opportunity to give them a proof of my favor. Be witnesses thereof.”

She broke off a twig from a hazel-bush, approached the children, shook the gold coins out of their hands so that they flew into the grass, and touched their heads with the branch.

“Arise,” said she; “from this day forth scissors shall never cut off your hair any more. As vassals of the castle of Hohentwiel ye knelt down, as freedmen and freemen, stand up again; and may ye be as fond of each other in your free state as before!”

This was the form of granting freedom, according to the Salic law.²⁰⁶ In the same way the Emperor Lotharius had shaken the golden denarius out of his old serving-woman Doda’s hand, thus freeing her from the yoke of slavery; and as Audifax was of Franconian origin, Frau Hadwig had not acted in accordance with her own Allemannic custom.

The two children arose. They understood what had happened. A strange dizzy feeling came over the little goat-herd. The dream of his youth,—liberty, golden treasure,—all had become true! a lasting reality for all days to come! . . .

He beheld Ekkehard's serious face, and throwing himself at his feet with Hadumoth, he cried: —

“Father Ekkehard, we thank you also for having been so good to us!”

“What a pity that it is already so late,” said Praxedis, “or you might have joined another pair in wedlock; or at least have sanctified a solemn betrothal; for these two belong as much to each other as yonder pair.”

Ekkehard let his blue eyes rest long on the two children. He laid his hands on their heads and made the sign of the cross over them.

“Where is happiness?” he softly said to himself.

Late at night, Rudimann the cellarer rode back to his monastery. The ford was dry; he could cross it on horseback. From the abbot's cell a gleam of light still fell on the lake. Rudimann knocked at his door, and but half opening it, said: —

“My ears have heard more to-day than was pleasing to hear. 'T is all over with the Saspach estate on the Rhine. She is going to set that milksop of St. Gall over it.” . . .

“*Varium et mutabile semper femina!* Woman is ever fickle and changeable!”²⁰⁷ murmured the abbot, without looking round. “Good night!”

CHAPTER XVII.

GUNZO VERSUS EKKEHARD.

WHILE all that has gone before was happening on the shores of the Bodensee, a monk had been sitting in his cell in the monastery of St. Amandus *sur l'Élon*, far away in the Belgian lands. Day after day, whenever the convent rules permitted it, he sat there as if under a spell. Stormy winter had come; the rivers were frozen, snow covered the plain as far as eye could see,—he heeded it not. Spring drove away winter,—he did not care. The brothers talked of war and the evil tidings from the neighboring Rhine-lands,—but he had no ear for such things.

In his cell, chairs and bed were covered with parchments; all the monastery's books had emigrated to his chamber. He read and read and read, as if he wanted to find out the final cause of all being. On his right lay the Psalms and Holy Scriptures; on his left the remains of heathen wisdom. All was diligently rummaged through; now and then a scornful smile interrupted the seriousness of his studies, and he would hastily scribble down some lines on a narrow strip of parchment. Were these grains of gold and precious stones which he was digging out of the mines of ancient wisdom? No.

“What can be the matter with brother Gunzo?” queried his fellow-monks. “His tongue used to go like a mill-wheel, and books were seldom disturbed in their rest by him. He often boasted, ‘They can only tell me what I already know,’—and now? Now his pen hurries on, sputters and splutters, so that even in the most distant corridor you may hear the scratching it makes. Does he hope to become the Emperor’s prothonotary or prime minister? Is he trying to find the philosopher’s stone, or is he writing his journey in Italy?”

But brother Gunzo kept on at his work. Untiringly he drained his jug of water and read his classics. The first thunder-storms came, announcing that summer with its sweltering heat was at hand; but he let it thunder and lighten and sat unconcerned. In the middle of the night he sometimes broke his slumbers and rushed up to his inkstand, as if he had caught some happy thoughts in his dreams; but they often vanished before he had succeeded in writing them down. Still his mind was fixed upon his purpose, and consoling himself with the Homeric promise, “The day is certainly coming,” he would creep back to his couch.

Gunzo was in the prime of life; of medium height and portly dimensions. When he stood before his well-polished metal mirror in the early morning, and gazed somewhat longer than was necessary on his own image, he would often stroke his reddish beard as if he were going forth to fight in single combat to the death.

In his veins flowed Franconian mingled with Gal-

lic blood ; this gave him something of the liveliness and sprightliness wanting in the German of pure extraction. For this reason he had bitten more goose-quills, and spoilt more nibs while writing, and held more soliloquies than any monk in a German monastery would have done in the same space of time. But he mastered the natural restlessness of his body, and manfully compelled his feet to keep quiet under the book-laden table.

It was a balmy summer evening ; his pen had been flitting again over the patient parchment like a will-o'-the-wisp ; there was a squeaking as the letters were formed ; then it began to slacken its pace, — then came a pause ; a few strokes more, and he executed a tremendous flourish on the blank space that was left, so that the ink made an involuntary shower of spots like black constellations.

He had written the word *FINIS*.

With a long deep sigh he rose from his chair, like a man from whose mind some great weight has been taken. As he gazed on what lay black on white before him, he solemnly exclaimed : —

“ Praised be St. Amandus ! we are avenged ! ”

At this exalted moment, he had finished a diatribe dedicated to the venerable brotherhood on the Reichenau, and aimed at — Ekkehard, the door-keeper at St. Gall.

When the fair-haired interpreter of Vergil took leave of his monastery, and went to the Hohentwiel, never, though he searched the remotest corners of his

memory, could he have thought that there was a man living whose greatest wish and desire was to take vengeance on him; for he was inoffensive and kindhearted, and would not willingly hurt a fly. And yet so it was, for between heaven and earth, and in the mind of a pedant, many things happen which the reason of the reasonable never dreams of.

History has its caprices, both in preserving and in destroying. The German songs and epics which the great Emperor Karl caused to be so carefully collected were to perish in the rubbish of the following ages; Gunzo's work, which gave no pleasure to any one of the few who ever read it, has come down to posterity.²⁰⁸

Let the monstrous provocation which brought down the Gallic scholar's vengeance, therefore, be told in his own words:—

For a long space of time—thus he wrote to his friends on the Reichenau—*the revered and beloved King Otto had carried on negotiations with the princes of Italy to let me come over to his realm. But as I was not so subject to any, or of such low birth either, that I could have been compelled in any way, he himself sent me an invitation so urgent that I pledged myself to come. So it came to pass that when he left Italy, I followed him, and I followed him with the idea that my coming, while harming no one, might benefit many; for to what are we not urged by the love of our fellow-creatures, and the desire to please? And so I set forth, not like a*

Briton armed with the arrows of censure, but in the service of love and science.

Over high mountain-passes and steep ravines and valleys I arrived at last at the monastery of St. Gall, in a state of such bodily exhaustion that my hands, stiffened by the icy mountain air, refused me their service, and strangers had to assist me down from my mule.

The traveller's hope was to find a peaceful resting-place within the monastic walls. I beheld also the frequent bowing of heads, the sober-colored garments, the noiseless footsteps, and their sparing use of speech, so I was wholly unprepared for any calamity; although, by a strange chance, Juvenal's saying with regard to the false philosophers, —

Sparing and soft is their speech, but malice lurks in their silence, —

kept coming into my mind. And who would have believed that that heathen was gifted with a prophetic vision of cowl-bearing perversity?

Yet I harmlessly enjoyed my life, waiting to see whether, amongst the scanty whisperings of the brothers, some sparks of philosophical wisdom might not flash forth. Not a spark flashed forth however; they were preparing the weapons of fraud.

Among their number there was also a young pupil, and an older one who — well, he was what he was. They called him a worthy teacher of the school; although to me he appeared rather to look at the world with the eyes of a turtle-dove. Of this languishing-looking wise-acre I shall presently have

something more to say. Listen, and judge of his deed!

Walking up and down, he instigated the pupil to become a partaker of his base design.

Night had come, and with it the time for grief-stilling slumber:

After enjoying the meal, paid we to Bacchus his dues.

And as we were sitting round the table, conversing together in Latin, an untoward fate seduced me into being guilty of a mistake in the use of a case, putting an accusative where I should have put an ablative.

Now it became evident in what kind of arts that far-famed teacher had been instructing his pupil all day long.

“Such an offence against the laws of grammar deserves the rod!” Such were that little imp’s mocking words to me, the well-trying scholar; and moreover he produced a satirical lampoon, which that teacher of his must have inspired, and which caused a rough cisalpine burst of laughter in the refectory at the expense of the stranger guest.

But who does not know what the verses of a set of overbearing monks must be like? What does such a one know of the inner structure of a poem, where one gem must be artistically fitted to another to make it shine and glow? What of the high dignity of poetry? He puckers up his lips and spits out a poem like that one of Lucilius, who was branded by Horace as being guilty, while standing on one foot only, of dictating two hundred lines and more within an hour.

Judge now, ye venerable brothers, what insults have been heaped on me; and what must be the character of the man who can hold up a fellow-creature to ridicule for not using an ablative.

The man who, intending only a harmless jest, had committed this crime, was Ekkehard. Only a few weeks before the sudden turn in his fate brought him to the Hohentwiel, the terrible deed had been done. By the next morning he had forgotten the conversation with the supercilious Italian; but in the bosom of him who had been convicted of the wrong accusative was matured a rancor as fierce and gnawing as that which, because of the shield of Achilles, drove the Telamonian Ajax to fall on his sword, and which even in the dark shadows of Hades made him sit by himself and sulk in impotent wrath.

He rode northward out of the valley through which the Sitter rushes; he saw the Bodensee and the Rhine, and thought of the accusative! He entered the ancient gray gates of Cologne and crossed the frontiers of Belgium; the false accusative sat behind him on the saddle like an incubus. The cloister-walls of St. Amandus gave him a peaceful refuge; but in the early psalms at morning, and during the litany at vespers, the accusative rose before his mind, exacting its sin-offering.

Of all the unpleasant days of your life, those imprint themselves deepest in your mind when by your own fault you have been subjected to humilia-

tion. Instead of being angry with yourself, you have a bitter feeling against all those who were the involuntary witnesses of your shame. The human heart is so very, very unwilling to confess its own failings; and many a man who unmoved can think of past battles and dangers feels the blood rush into his cheeks at the recollection of some foolish word which escaped him just when he would have liked to shine with a brilliant remark.

Therefore Gunzo took his revenge on Ekkehard; and he had a sharp and able pen, and had spent many a month over his work, so that it became a master-piece of its kind. It was a black soup, made up of hundreds of learned quotations, richly seasoned with pepper and wormwood and all those spicy, bitter things which give such a delicious flavor, especially to the controversies of ecclesiastical men.

Besides this, a delightful undercurrent of rudeness pervaded the whole, so that it seems to the reader as if he heard a man thrashed with regular flails in a neighboring barn. This makes a very pleasant contrast to the fine art of the present time, when the poison is presented in gilded pills, and the combatants politely take off their hats to each other before they proceed to break each other's heads.

The treatise was divided into two parts: the first serving to prove to Ekkehard that only an ignorant and uncultivated mind could be shocked by use of a wrong case; the second was to convince the world that the author, Gunzo, was the wisest, most learned, and most pious of all his contemporaries.

For this end he had in the sweat of his brow read the classics and the holy Scriptures, so that he might make a list of all the places in which poetic license or carelessness had also used an accusative instead of an ablative. He found two examples in Vergil, one in Homer, one in Terence, and one in Priscian. Furthermore, an example out of Persius where the vocative stands in place of a nominative, and one in Sallust where the ablative stands in the place of the genitive, besides a number of instances out of the books of Moses and the Psalms.

And if such things can be found even in the Holy Scriptures, who is so impious as to dare to blame or to change such a mode of expression? Wrongly therefore the little monk of St. Gall believes that I am not well versed in grammar, though my tongue may sometimes be impeded by the practice of my own language, which is only allied to the Latin. Now blunders are made through carelessness and human imperfection in general; for, says Priscianus very truly:—

“I do not believe that a single one of all human inventions can be found perfect in all respects.”

*Horace also excuses negligences of style and language in eminent men: “Sometimes even the worthy Homer nods;” * and Aristotle says in his book on the hermencia: † “All that our tongue utters is but an expression of what is stamped on*

* *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.* HORACE: De Arte Poetica, 359.

† Oratory, or Philosophical Grammar.

our mind. Now the concept of a thing comes into existence before the expression, and therefore the thing itself is of higher importance than the word. But whenever the meaning is abstruse, thou shalt patiently and with thy reasoning powers try to find out the real import."

Then followed a deluge of classical examples of awkward and negligent expressions of thought, ending with the words of the Apostle, who calls himself "unskilled with regard to speech, but not unskilled in knowledge."

Accordingly, if you examine the behavior of my St. Gall antagonist, you might believe that he had once broken into a wise man's garden and stolen from one of the hot-beds a radish, which had upset his stomach and increased his gall. Let every one therefore keep his garden protected from such rascals. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

Yet it is possible also that he could not have done otherwise. He may have rummaged the whole day long in the secret recesses of his cowl to find something wherewith to regale the stranger guest, and not finding anything but treachery and malice, he set before him a taste of that. Bad men have evil possessions.

In harmony with his behavior was his outward appearance, which we did not fail to study carefully. His countenance bore a sallow lustre, like cheap metal used for the counterfeiting of the genuine; his hair was curly; his hood finer and daintier than necessary, and his shoes of light make, — so that one

could detect in him all the signs of vanity which were a vexation in the eyes of St. Hieronymus when he wrote :—

“ To my great regret, there are in my parish some of the clergy who are very anxious for their garments to be well scented and their nails well polished; who anoint and soften their curled hair with ointments, and who wear dainty embroidered shoes. Such pageantry, however, is scarcely fitted for a dandy and bridegroom, much less for one of the Lord's elect.”

Furthermore, I have reflected whether the sound of his own name is not likewise in harmony with his actions. And how so? Ekkehard, or Akhar, was his name, — as if even at his baptism, through a prophetic providence he had been stigmatized with the name of a malefactor. For who does not know of that Akhar who appropriated out of the booty at Jericho a goodly Babylonish garment and two hundred shekels of silver, together with a wedge of gold, so that Joshua had him led out into a remote valley, and all Israel stoned him to death, and all he possessed was given up to the flames? — Of such a prototype the Akhar of St. Gall has shown himself to be a worthy successor; for he who disregards the laws of politeness and good breeding acts as badly as a thief. He embezzles the gold of true wisdom.

Were it permitted to believe in the Pythagorean transmigration of souls, it would be beyond all doubt that the soul of the Hebrew Akhar had entered into this Ekkehard, and it would be worthy of all pity; the body of a fox even is a habitation preferable to that of a crafty monk.

All this is said without spite. My hatred is directed only against the man's inherent wickedness, —consequently only the attribute and not the substance itself, which we are bound to honor as God's likeness, according to Scripture.

Please to observe now, continued Gunzo in the second part of his book, how irrationally my enemy has acted against the benefits of science. More than a hundred written volumes had I brought with me over the Alps, weapons of peace, such as Marcianus' flowery instructions in the seven liberal arts; Plato's unfathomable depth in his "Timæus;" Aristotle's obscure and by us of the present day scarcely illuminated wisdom in his book on the hermeneia, and Cicero's eloquence in the "Topica."

How serious and fruitful might our conversation not have been if they had questioned me about these treasures! How could I imagine that I, whom God has so richly gifted, would be turned into ridicule for a mistake in a case! — I, who know Donatius and Priscian almost by heart!

That puffed-up coxcomb probably believes that he carries Dame Grammar all in his hood; beloved brethren, he has scarcely had a glimpse of her back in the distance, and if he were to try to catch sight of her radiant countenance, his awkward feet would trip, and he would fall headlong to the ground. Dame Grammar is a noble woman; to wood-cutters she has one aspect, to an Aristotle another.

But shall I speak to you of Grammar's sister, of Dialectic, whom that Greek sage called the nurse of his intellect! O noble art! that entangles the fool

in her nets, but shows the wise man how to evade them, and discloses to us the hidden threads by which being and not-being are linked together! But of that, yon cowl-bearer knows nothing! Nothing of that subtle fineness with which nineteen kinds of syllogisms can explain all that has ever been thought before and all that is thinkable. God is wise, and deprives him of such knowledge; since he would use it only for deceitful and wicked ends . . .

In this way the learned Italian proved his superiority in all the liberal arts. To rhetoric and all its treasures he devoted a whole section, wherein he spoke with pointed emphasis of certain persons to whom the Goddess Minerva had once appeared in their dreams, and of fools who believed that brevity was the soul of wisdom. Then he went on to discuss arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, introducing profound essays on the questions whether the heavenly bodies were gifted with souls and reason and a claim on immortality; and further whether at the time when Joshua uttered the command, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou Moon in the valley of Ajalon," he had also imposed immobility on the other five planets; or whether these had been allowed to continue their circular motion.

A thorough investigation of this problem gave occasion for speaking of the harmony of the spheres, and then of music, as the last of the seven arts; and thus the vessel of vengeance, carried along by the billowy floods of learning, was at last enabled to reach the goal.

To what end now have I expounded all this? asked he in conclusion.

Not to expound the elements of the liberal arts, but to expose the folly of an ignoramus who preferred pecking away at grammatical blunders, to deriving true wisdom from his guest. For though inwardly Art may be forever denied to him, he might at least have caught an outward reflection from me. But he was too much puffed up with insolent pride, so he preferred to pass for a sage among his fellows; like that frog which, sitting in the swamp, thought to excel the bull in size.

Alas! the pitiful creature has never once stood on the heights of science, and heard God's voice speak to him. He was born in the wilderness, he grew up amid silly, prattling people, and his soul has remained on the level of the beasts of the field. He was loath to mingle with the active life of this world, he is incapable of a life of inward contemplation, and so the enemy of mankind has set his mark upon him. Willingly I would exhort you to aid him with healing medicine; but I fear, I sadly fear that his disease is too deeply rooted.

For on a hardened skin even sneeze-wort will prove unavailing,

says Persius.

And now ye venerable brothers, please to decide from what I have placed before you, whether I am the man to have merited such treatment and ridicule from that fool. I deliver both him and myself into your hands; before the judgment of the just the fool falls back into his own nothingness. Finis!

“. . . Praised be St. Amandus!” said Gunzo once more, when the last word of his work had been written down. The old serpent would certainly have swelled with joy if it could have watched him when, in the full glory of his likeness to deity, he added the last dot. “*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.*” And Gunzo? — he did the same.

Then he walked up to his metal mirror, and gazed for a long time at his own reflection, as if it were of the greatest importance for him to study the countenance of the man who had annihilated the Ekkehard of St. Gall. He finally made a deep and respectful bow before his reflection.

The bell in the refectory had some time before announced the supper-hour. Psalm and grace were finished, the brotherhood was already seated before the soft millet-porridge, when Gunzo at last came in. His face was radiant. The dean silently pointed to a corner remote from his customary seat; for he who too often failed to be punctual was as a punishment separated from the others, and his wine was given to the poor.²⁰⁹ But, without a murmur, Gunzo sat down, and drank his Belgian pump-water, — for his book lay finished upstairs; that consoled him.

When the meal was over he invited some of his friends to his cell, mysteriously, as if they were about to dig for hidden treasure. He read his work out to them.

The monastery of St. Gallus, with its libraries, schools, and learned theologians, was far too famous in all Christendom for the disciples of St. Amandus

not to listen with secret joy to the whizzing of Gunzo's arrows. Cleverness and a blameless life are often far more offensive to the world than sin and wickedness. So they nodded their hoary heads approvingly as Gunzo read out the choice bits.

"It was time long before this to have taught these Helvetian bears how to dance!" said one. "Insolence, joined to roughness, deserves no other music."

Gunzo read on.

"*Bene, optime, aristotelicissime!*" murmured the assembled monks, when he had ended.

"May the dish please you, Brother Akhar!" exclaimed another. "Belgian herbs to flavor the Helvetian cheese!"

The brother head-cook embraced Gunzo, and wept with joy. "Nothing so learned, profound, and beautiful had ever before gone out into the world from the cloisters of St. Amandus."

Only one of the brothers stood immovable near the wall.

"Well?" asked Gunzo.

"And where does love come in?" softly asked the brother, and said no more. Gunzo felt the reproach.

"Thou art right, Hucbald," said he. "This want shall be supplied. Love requires us to pray for our enemies. I will add a prayer for the poor fool at the end of the manuscript. That will look conciliatory, and impress all tender minds. What?"

The brother made no reply. It was very late; on tiptoe they left the cell.

Gunzo tried to retain him who had spoken of love, as he cared a good deal for his opinion; but Hucbald turned away and followed the others.

“Matthew twenty-three, twenty-five,” he murmured as his foot crossed the threshold. No one heard him.

But slumber that night kept aloof from Gunzo the learned, and he read the production of his industry over and over again. He soon knew in what spot every single word stood, and yet he could not withdraw his eyes from the well-known lines. At last he seized his pen.

“A more pious ending!” said he; “so be it!”

He reflected awhile, then paced up and down his cell with slow, measured steps.

“It shall be done in artistic hexameters, for who has ever seen an insult retaliated in so worthy a manner?”

So he sat down and wrote. He intended to write a prayer for his enemy, — but no one can act contrary to his nature. Once more he glanced over the written pages. They were really too good! Then he penned the supplement.

As the cock was crowing at the gray dawn, this also was finished. Two dozen and a half lines of rattling monkish verse. That his thoughts by degrees diverged from the prayer for his antagonist, to himself and his glorious work, was but a natural transition for a man of so much self-esteem.

With unction he wrote down the last five lines :

*Go now into the world, my book; and if ever thou findest
Men with malicious tongues who slander my glorious labors,*

Crush them without remorse, and fling them into the dust-heap

*Till thy author one day shall enter the kingdom of Heaven,
Promised unto the man who has not buried his talent.*

The parchment was rough and resistant; he had to press hard on the reed-pen in order to make it receive the letters.

The next day Gunzo packed up his epistle in a tin box, and this again in a linen cover. A bondsman of the monastery who had slain his brother had made a vow to go on a pilgrimage to the graves of twelve saints with his right arm chained to his right hip; and to pray there until some heavenly sign of grace was shown to him.²¹⁰ His way led up the Rhine.

Gunzo hung the tin case round his neck, and a few weeks later, it was delivered safe and sound into the hands of the gate-keeper at Reichenau. Gunzo well knew his friends there, so he had dedicated the diatribe to them.

On the same day the old Moengal had also some business at the monastery. In the strangers' room sat the Belgian pilgrim. They had given him some fish-soup; he was finding much difficulty in eating it; his chains clinked whenever he lifted his arm.

"Go home again and marry the widow of the man thou hast slain," said Moengal. "That would be a better expiation than to make a fool's journey into the wide world with your clanking chains."

The pilgrim shook his head silently, as if he

thought that such chains might prove heavier still than any which the blacksmith could forge.

Moengal asked to be announced to the abbot.

"He is very busy reading," was the answer. Nevertheless they allowed him to go in.

"Sit down, parish-priest," said the abbot, graciously. "I know that you are rather fond of pie and peppery things. I have something for you."

He read out to him Gunzo's libel which had just arrived. The old man listened: his eyebrows went higher and higher, and his nostrils expanded wider and wider.

When he came to the description of Ekkehard's curly hair and fine shoes, the abbot shook with laughter; but Moengal sat there rigid and serious; on his forehead gathered a triple frown, like clouds before a thunderstorm.

"Well, I reckon that his pride will be well whipped out of him!" said the abbot. "Sublime! really sublime! And an abundance of knowledge. That tells; it can not be answered."

"But it can, though," grimly said the parish-priest.

"How?" eagerly asked the abbot.

Moengal made a gesture of evil import.

"Cut a good stick from a holly-bush, or a brave hazel-wand, then go down the Rhine, until there is but an arm's length left between the Suabian wood and the Italian writer's back. And then" . . .

He concluded his speech in pantomime.

"You are rude, parish-priest, and have no appreciation of learning," said the abbot. "Such a trea-

tise as this can only be written by a refined intellect. Respect, I say!"

"Hoiho!" exclaimed Moengal, who had worked himself into a fine rage. "*Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross*, says Solomon. Learning? Why, the wood in my parish, with all its hazel-bushes, is as learned as that; for it also shouts back what you shout out to it, and that is at least a lovely echo. We know these Belgian peacocks, and they are found also in other parts. Their feathers are stolen, and their crowing, in spite of tail and rainbow-colors behind, is hoarse and always will be hoarse; no matter how they puff up their necks. Before my great recovery, I also believed that it was singing, instead of croaking, when a fellow swells out his cheeks with grammar and dialectics, but now: 'Good night, *Marcianus Capella*,' is what we say at Radolfszell!"

"You had better be thinking about going home," said the abbot; "the clouds are coming up very black over Constance."

Then the parish-priest noticed that he was expounding his views on healthy opinions and science on the wrong man. So he took leave.

"Thou mightest as well have remained in thy monastery at Benchor on the emerald isle, thou Irish blockhead," thought Abbot Wazmann and gave him a very cool dismissal.

"Rudimann!" he called out through the dark corridor. Rudimann appeared.

"You remember the last vintage-time," began the

abbot, "and the blow given you by a certain milk-sop on whom a sentimental duchess is now about to bestow certain lands?"

"I remember the blow," replied Rudimann, with a bashful smirk, like a maiden who is questioned about her lover.

"That blow has been returned by some one. You may be satisfied. Read this."

He handed Gunzo's parchment to him.

"By your leave," said Rudimann, stepping up to the window.

The pater cellarer had tasted many a noble wine during the time that he had occupied his present post, but even on the day when the bishop of Cremona had sent him some jugs of sparkling brown Asti, his face had not shone so radiantly as it did now.

"What a precious gift from God is thorough knowledge and a fine style," he exclaimed. "Little Brother Ekkehard is done for. He can not dare to show his face again."

"You expect too much," said the abbot. "But what is not, may be. The learned Brother Gunzo is helping us toward it. His epistle must not be allowed to moulder unread. So have some copies taken; better six than three. The young man must be driven away from the Hohentwiel. I am not fond of birds who pretend to sing better than their elders. Snow on his tonsure will do him good. We will send a note to our brother in St. Gall, urging him to command his return. How is it with the list of his sins?"

Rudimann slowly raised his left hand and began to count on his fingers.

“Shall I recite them? First he disturbed the peace of our monastery during the vintage, by, . . .”

“Stop,” said the abbot, “that is past. All that happened before the battle with the Huns is buried and forgotten. The Burgundians made ²¹¹ that law, and we will adhere to it also.”

“Then without the help of my fingers,” said the cellarer. “The doorkeeper of St. Gallus has become addicted to haughtiness and insolence, since the day on which he left his monastery. Without a greeting on his lips he passes brothers whose age and intellect ought to claim his reverence. Then, on the holy day when we beat the Huns, he presumed to preach the sermon, though such an important and solemn office ought to have been performed by one of the reverend abbots. Furthermore, he presumed to baptize a heathenish prisoner; although such a baptism should have been superintended by the regular priest of the parish, and not by one whose duty is at the gate of St. Gallus.

“But what may be the result of the forward youth’s constant contact with his noble mistress, He who searcheth all hearts alone can tell! It was observed at the wedding of that baptized heathen that he did not shun solitary conversation with that lady in Israel; and that he heaved frequent sighs, like a shot buck. Likewise it has been remarked with heartfelt sorrow that a Greek maiden named Praxedis, as fickle as a will-o’-the-wisp, is flickering about him; so that, what is left undone by the mis-

dress may be finished by her hand-maiden, of whom one is not fully assured that she belongs even to the Orthodox faith. Now a frivolous woman is more bitter than death; her heart is snares and nets, and her hands are bands; only he who pleases God can escape from her."

It was most becoming that Rudimann, the protector of the uppermaid Kerhildis, should so accurately remember the words of Ecclesiastes.

"Enough," said the abbot. "Chapter twenty-nine, — On the recall of absent brothers. That will work, and I have a presentiment that the fickle lady will soon be fluttering about on her rock, like an old swallow whose nestling has been taken away. Good-bye, sweetheart! . . . and Saspach will yet become ours!"

"Amen!" murmured Rudimann.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MISSION OF HERR SPAZZO THE
CHAMBERLAIN.

EARLY on a cool summer day, Ekkehard walked out of the castle gate into the breezy morning air. He had passed a sleepless night, pacing up and down in his chamber. The duchess had sent wild thoughts chasing one another through his mind; in his head there was a buzzing and humming as if a covey of wild ducks were flying about in it. He shunned Frau Hadwig's presence, and yet every moment that he was away he longed to be near her. The old happy ingenuousness had taken wing. His ways had become absent and variable. The time which no mortal ever escaped, and which the worthy Gottfried of Strassburg afterwards described as "an ever-present pain, amid perpetual bliss," had come for him.

Before the night set in there had been a fierce thunder-shower. He had opened his little window and enjoyed the lightning-flashes as they darted through the darkness, lighting up the shores of the lake; and he had laughed as night triumphed again, and the thunder rolled heavily over the mountains.

Now it was a sunny morning. Glistening dew-drops hung on the grass, and here and there in

the shade an unmelted hailstone lay. Hill and vale were silent, but the blasted fruits of the fields hung down their broken stalks; for the hail-storm had blighted the fair promising harvest. From the rocky hillside mud-colored brooklets ran down into the valley.

As yet nothing was stirring in the fields; it was only just daybreak. Only in the distance, over the hilly ground which extends in undulating lines back of the Hohentwiel, came a man striding along. It was Cappan the Hun. He carried willow-twigs and all sorts of snares, and was starting out on his work at waging war on the field-mice. He was whistling merrily on a linden-leaf, the picture of a happy bridegroom; for in the arms of the tall Friderun he had found new life.

“How are you?” mildly said Ekkehard, as he passed by with a humble salutation. The Hun pointed up to the blue sky: “As if I were in heaven!” said he, gayly spinning round on his wooden shoe.

Ekkehard turned his steps away; for a long while still the whistling of the mouse-catcher rang through the morning silence. Ekkehard went to the edge of the precipice. There lay a weather-beaten boulder, over which bent an elder-bush with its luxuriant white blossoms. Ekkehard sat down; long he gazed dreamily into the distance; then he drew out from under his habit a neatly bound little book and began to read. It was not a breviary, and not the Psalter. “The Song of Solomon” was the inscription. It was not a good book for him. To be

sure he had once been taught that the lily-scented song expressed the ardent longing for the Church, the true bride of the soul; in his younger days he had studied it, undisturbed by the gazelle eyes and the dove-like cheeks and slender-as-the-palm-tree waist of the Sulamite woman; now he read it with other eyes. A soft dreaminess came over him.

*Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Terrible as an army with banners?*

He looked up to the towers of the Hohentwiel, glittering in the first rays of the morning sun, and knew the answer.

And again he read:—

*I was asleep, but my heart waked:
It is the voice of my beloved, that knocketh,
saying:
Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my un-
defiled:
For my head is filled with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night.*

A breeze shook down some of the white blossoms on the little book. Ekkehard did not shake them off. He bent down his head, and sat there motionless.

Meanwhile, Capan had cheerfully begun his daily labors. There was a field down in the plain, on the border of the lands belonging to the Hohentwiel; and here the field-mice had established their camp. The hamsters were carrying off whole stores

of corn for the winter, and the moles were digging their passages in the gravelly soil.

Cappan had been ordered to that spot. Like a statesman in a rebellious province, he was to restore order and clear the land of all obnoxious subjects.

The floods of the late thunderstorm had flushed the hidden refuges. He dug them up carefully, and in the early morning light slew many a field-mouse before it knew what had happened. Then he carefully prepared his various gins and traps; in other places he scattered poisoned baits, which he had concocted out of fever-root and true love; and while thus intent on murder bent, he whistled merrily, and knew not what heavy clouds were gathering over his head.

The land on which he was exercising his art bordered on the Reichenau domain. Under the shade of the stately old oak-forest some straw-thatched roofs might be seen. This was the Schlangenhof, which, together with many acres of fields and forest, belonged to the monastery. A pious widow had left it to St. Pirminius in order to secure eternal bliss for her soul.

It had been let to a farmer, a rough man with a thick, knotty skull, full of hard, stubborn thoughts. He had many men and maid-servants, and horses and cattle, and was well off, for he took good care of the copper-brown snakes which infested court and stable. Their dish of milk in the stable-corner was never allowed to remain empty, and in consequence they had got quite tame, and played about in the straw and never harmed any one.

“These snakes are the blessing of the whole farm,” the old man would often repeat. “It is different with us peasants from what it is at the emperor’s court.”

For the last two days, however, the monastery-farmer had not enjoyed one single quiet hour; for the heavy thunder-showers made him very anxious about his crops. When three of them had passed by, without doing any damage, he had a horse-cart hitched up, and placed on it a sack of last year’s rye, and drove over to the deacon of the little Singen church.

He grinned so as to show his big grinders, as the farmer’s team came out of the forest: he knew his customer. His living was scanty, but out of the folly of mankind he made enough to butter his bread with.

The monastery-farmer had taken the sack of rye down from the cart, and said: —

“Master Otfried, you have always done your part well, and have prayed away the thunder-storms from my fields. Don’t forget me, if it should come on to thunder again.”

And the deacon had replied: “I think you must have seen me as I stood under the church-door, and, facing the Schlangenhof, sprinkled the holy water three times toward the tempest, in the shape of the holy cross; besides saying the verse about the three holy nails.²¹² That drove away shower and hail, I assure you! Your rye, farmer, would make excellent bread, if a trifle of barley were added to it.”

Then the monastery-farmer had returned home, and was just thinking of filling a smaller sack with

barley, as a well-deserved present additional for his advocate with Heaven. But once more poison-black clouds came piling up, and when they were looming dark and terrible over the oak-wood, a whitish-gray little cloud hurried up after them. It had five prongs, like the fingers of a hand, and it swelled up and shot forth flashes of lightning, and was a hail-storm far worse than any before.

The monastery-farmer had at first stood confidently under his porch, thinking: —

“The deacon of Singen will drive it away again.”

But when the big hailstones began pelting his field of grain, and the ears fell like young soldiers in a battle, and everything was ruined, he struck his clenched fist on the oak table: —

“May that cursed liar at Singen be damned.”

In the height of despair at the failure of the deacon's prayers, he now tried an old traditional remedy of the Hegau. He tore down some branches from the nearest oak-tree, and pulled off the leaves, which he put into his venerable wedding-coat, and hung it up on the mighty oak-tree which overspread his house. But the hailstones continued to beat down the grain, in spite of wedding-coat and oak-leaves.

As though under a spell, the monastery-farmer stood there with his eyes riveted on the bundle swinging in the storm, and looked to see the rain-abolishing wind come out of it, — but the fair-weather wind came not!

Then his eyebrows contracted; ominously he bit his lips, and walked into the house. The servants kept well out of his way: they knew what it fore-

boded when their master bit his lips. Almost heart-broken with grief, he threw himself down at the oaken table, and he sat there long, without speaking a word. Then he uttered an awful curse. This, with the monastery-farmer, betokened a change for the better.

The head-servant came up timidly, and stood in front of him. He was a gigantic son of Anak, but before his master he stood as timid as a child.

“If I knew the witch!” exclaimed the farmer. “The weather-witch! the cursed old hag! She should not with impunity have shaken out her skirts over the Schlangenhof. . . . May her tongue wither in her mouth!”

“Need it have been a witch?” suggested the head-servant. “Since the Forest woman of the Hohenkrähen has been driven away, no other has showed her face here.”

“Hold thy tongue until thou art asked!” fiercely growled the convent-farmer.

The man remained standing there; he knew his turn would come. They were silent for some time. Then the old man gruffly said:—

“What dost thou know?”

“I know what I know,” replied the other, with a sly expression.

Again they were silent for a while. The farmer looked out of the window. The harvest was destroyed. He turned round.

“Speak,” cried he.

“Did you notice that cloud scud, and how it sailed past the dark one?” asked the man. “What was it?”

It was the cloud-ship. Some one has sold our grain to the sailors of that ship." . . .

The farmer crossed himself, as if he wanted to prevent his saying more.

"I have heard my grandmother tell about it," continued the servant. "She had often heard people speak about it in Alsace, when the thunder-storms came over the Odilienberg. The cloud-ship comes from a land called Magonia, and is always white, and sails on black clouds. Fasolt and Mermuth sit in it, and throw down the hailstones on the fields, if the great weather-wizard has given them the power to do so. Then they hoist up our grain into their ship, and sail back to Magonia, where they are well paid for it.²¹³ To call up the cloud-ship pays better than to read masses. But we get the husks."

The farmer grew thoughtful. Then he seized the servant by the collar, and shook him.

"Who?" he cried violently. But the man put his finger to his lips. It had become late.

At the same early hour when Cappan had met Ekkehard, the monastery-farmer, accompanied by the head-servant, was walking through the fields, to look at the damage. Neither said a word. The damage was great. But the land on the other side had suffered less, as if the oak-wood had been the boundary line for the hail-storm.

On the neighboring field Cappan was doing his work. He had finished setting his traps, and was now ready to rest awhile. So he drew from his belt a piece of black bread and a fitch of bacon,

which looked as soft and white as new-fallen snow, and was so tempting that he could not help thinking with deep emotion of his new Frau who provided him with such food. And he thought about all sorts of things which had occurred since their wedding, and he gazed longingly up at the larks, as if he wanted them to fly over to the peak of the Hohenstoffeln, to greet house and home for him, and he felt so happy that once again he gave a mighty jump into the air.

As his slender spouse was not in sight, it occurred to him to lie down full length on the ground, while he ate his luncheon; for at home his wife made him sit down, in spite of his dislike of it.

Then it flashed through his mind that Friderun, in order to assure him better success in his work, had taught him a spell to exorcise the vermin, and had exhorted him not to forget to say it.

His breakfast would never have tasted good if he had not obeyed this injunction.

At the edge of the field was a stone, on which a half moon was engraven, the sign of Frau Hadwig's ownership. He went up to it, pulled off the wooden shoe from his right foot, stood barefoot on the boundary stone, and stretched out his arms toward the wood.

The farmer and his servant were walking among the trees; they stopped at this sight; Cappan did not see them, and he pronounced the words which Friderun had taught him:—

*Aius, sanctus,
Cardia cardiani!*

*Mouse and she-mouse,
 Marmot, mole,
 Hamster, cony,
 Young and old
 Leave the land
 I command:
 You are banned!
 Up above and down below
 From the fields, get you hence!
 Pestilence
 Go with you where'er you go!
 Afrias, aestrias, palamiasit! 214*

Hidden behind the oak-trees, the farmer and the head-servant had watched the exorcism. They now approached stealthily.

“*Afrias, aestrias, palamiasit!*” Cappan was saying for the second time, when a blow from behind struck him on the neck, and knocked him down. Strange sounds rang in his startled ears, and four fists were belaboring his back like flails on a barn floor.²¹⁵

“Out with it, thou corn-murderer!” yelled the monastery farmer to the Hun, who knew not what had happened to him. “What harm has the Schlangenhof ever done thee, thou weather-maker, mouse-catcher, hell-hound?”

Cappan gave no answer. He was dizzy. This only angered the old man the more.

“Look into his eyes,” he said to the head-servant, “and see if they are bleared, or if things are reflected wrong-side up in them.”

The man did as he was told, but he was honest.

“’T is not in the eyes,” said he.

“Then lift up his arm!”

He tore off the upper garment from the prostrate man, and examined his arm. Those who held communion with evil spirits bore some mark on the body. But they found nothing on the poor wretch, except some scars of old wounds.

This fact had almost restored him to favor in their eyes; for people were at that time impulsive, like wild beasts, and changeable in their passions, as a contemporary historian informs us.

But the servant-man's eyes by chance fell on the ground, where a large stag-beetle was crawling along. His wing-case shone violet-black and the reddish horns were proudly raised, like a stag's antlers. He had witnessed the ill-treatment which Cappan had received, and was going off, because he had no pleasure in it.

The head-servant started back in affright.

"The *donnerguggi*," he exclaimed.

"The thunder-beetle!" cried the convent-farmer likewise. Now Cappan was lost. That he and the beetle together had made the storm, was beyond all doubt, for stag-beetles draw down thunder and hail.

"Confess and repent, thou heathen dog!" said the farmer, searching for his knife. Then an idea struck him.

"He shall have his punishment on the grave of his brothers," he continued. "To revenge them he has called up the storm. Like sticks to like."

Meanwhile the servant had smashed the stag-beetle between two flat cobble-stones, which he buried in the ground.²¹⁶

Then they dragged Cappan across the field, to

the Hunnic mound, and bound his hands and feet with willow withes. Then the man ran over to the Schlangenhof, and called his fellow-servants. Wild and blood-thirsty they came. Some of them had danced at Cappan's wedding, but this did not in the least prevent their going out now to stone him.

Cappan began to reflect. What was laid to his charge he could not guess, but he understood that his life was in danger. So he uttered a shriek which rent the air, wild and sharp, like the death-cry of a wounded horse; it awakened Ekkehard from his reverie under the elder-tree. He recognized his godson's voice and looked down. A second time Cappan's cry rose up to him; then Ekkehard forgot the Song of Songs, and hurried down the mountain side.

He came in the nick of time. They had placed Cappan against the boulder covering the mound, and stood in a semi-circle around him. The convent-farmer was explaining how he had caught him in the very act of weather-making, and then he put the question. They unanimously agreed that he should be stoned to death.

Into this grim assembly rushed Ekkehard. The ecclesiastics of those days were less deluded than they were a few hundred years later, when thousands were burned to death on similar accusations; and the State signed the death-warrant; and the Church gave its blessing thereto. And Ekkehard, though convinced of the existence of witchcraft, had himself once copied the treatise of the pious Bishop Agobard, written to disprove the nonsensical popular superstition about weather-making. Indignant wrath gave eloquence to his speech.

“What are ye about, ye madmen, that ye should judge, when ye ought to pray that ye may not be judged yourselves! If the man has sinned, then wait till the new moon, when the parish-priest at Radolfszell will be holding court ²¹⁷ against all malefactors. There, let seven sworn men accuse him of the forbidden art, according to the laws of the emperor and of the Church.”

But the men of the Schlangenhof would not heed his words. A threatening murmur ran through their ranks.

Then Ekkehard thought of striking another chord in their rough minds.

“And do ye really believe, ye sons of the land of saints, of the Suabian soil, beloved of God, that such a poor, miserable Hun could have the power to command our clouds? Do ye think that the clouds would obey him? Would not rather a sharp Hegau flash of lightning have split his head to punish him for having dared to meddle with it?”

This last reason almost convinced the native pride of the men; but the monastery-farmer cried out, “The thunder-beetle! the thunder-beetle! we have seen it with our eyes crawling around his feet!”

Then the cry of “Stone him to death!” was again raised. A stone was hurled at the unfortunate Hun, making his blood flow. Then Ekkehard bravely threw himself on his god-son, shielding him with his own body.

This had its effect.

The men of the Schlangenhof looked at one another dumfounded. Then one of them turned round and

went away, and the others followed. The monastery-farmer at last stood there all alone.

“You take the part of the land-destroyer!” he cried angrily; but Ekkehard made no answer, so he likewise dropped the stone, and went away grumbling.

Cappan was in a pitiable condition; for “on a back which has been cultivated by Alemannian peasants’ fists, no grass will grow within a twelvemonth.” The stone had caused a wound on his head, which was bleeding profusely.

Ekkehard washed his head with rain-water, and made the sign of the cross over it to stop the bleeding, and then dressed the wound as well as he could. He thought of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The wounded man looked gratefully up at him out of his swollen eyes. Slowly Ekkehard led him up to the castle; and he had to argue with him, before he would venture to lean on his arm. The leg that had been wounded in the late battle hurt him; groaning, he limped up the hill.

On the Hohentwiel their arrival caused great excitement. Every one liked the Hun. The duchess descended into the courtyard; she bestowed a friendly nod on Ekkehard, on account of his kind compassion. The trespass of the monastery’s vassals against her subject raised her fierce indignation.

“This shall not be forgotten,” said she. “Be comforted, mouse-catcher! They shall pay thee damages for thy wounded pate; it will be as good as a dowry. And for the broken peace of the duchy, we shall extort the highest possible fine. Ten

pounds of silver shall not suffice. These monastery people grow as insolent as their masters!"

But the most indignant of all was Herr Spazzo the chamberlain.

"Did I withhold my sword from his head, when he lay with prodded thigh before me, that those clodhoppers of the Schlangenhof should pave it with their cobble-stones? And what if he was our enemy before? Now he is baptized, and I am his god-father, and am bound to look out for the welfare of his soul as well as of his body. Be content, god-child!" cried he, rattling his sword on the stone flags; "for as soon as thy scratch has been mended, I will go with thee on thy first walk, and then we will settle accounts with the monastery-farmer. Hail and thunder! we will settle the score so as to make the chips fly off his head! Things can not go on any longer with those farmers in this way. These fellows carry shields and arms like noblemen, and instead of hunting like peasants, they keep dogs broken in to fly at boars and bears; and blow on their horns as if they were the lords of the creation. Whenever a man carries his head higher than the rest, one may be sure he is a farmer!"²¹⁸

"Where was the crime committed?" asked the duchess.

"They dragged him from the boundary stone marked with the raised half-moon, clear over to the Hunnic mound," said Ekkehard.

"So the deed has been done even on our own ground and territory," indignantly exclaimed Frau

Hadwig. "That is too much! Herr Spazzo, you must to horse!"

"We must to horse!" echoed the chamberlain, fiercely.

"And demand that the abbot of Reichenau shall pay us this very day damages and fine for the peace which has been broken; and give us complete satisfaction. Our sovereign rights shall not be trampled upon by monastic insolence!"

"Shall not be trampled upon by monastic insolence!" repeated Herr Spazzo, still fiercer than before.

Seldom had he undertaken a mission more to his taste. He stroked his beard. "We will mount, Sir Abbot!" cried he, as he went up to his room to make preparations.

His green velvet waistcoat and gold-bordered chamberlain's mantle he left quietly hanging in his wardrobe, choosing instead a shabby gray hunting-suit; and he put on the large greaves which he had worn on the day of the battle. Then he fastened on his largest spurs, and tramped up and down a few times to try their effect. Finally he stuck three huge waving feathers into his steel cap, and strapped on his sword. Thus arrayed, he came down into the courtyard.

"Just look at me, most lovely maiden Praxedis," said he to the Greek girl, "and tell me what sort of expression my face wears now?"

He had cocked the steel cap over his left ear, and haughtily turned his head over his right shoulder.

"A most insolent one indeed, Sir Chamberlain!" was the reply.

“Then 't is all right,” said Herr Spazzo, mounting his steed.

He cantered out of the castle gate, making the sparks fly. It was his pleasant conviction that this time insolence was his bounden duty.

On the way he practised the part he was going to act. The storm had overthrown a pine-tree; the torn-up earth still clung to the roots. Its mighty branches blocked up the path.

“Out of the way, ecclesiastical blockhead!” called Herr Spazzo to the pine-tree; and when it did not move, he drew his sword.

“Forward, Falada.”

He spurred the mare, and drove her over the tree in one flying leap. While in the air, Herr Spazzo gave a good cut at the branches, making the twigs fly about.

In less than an hour and a half he was at the monastery gate. The small strip of land, which, when the water in the lake is low, links the shore with the island, was not now overflowed, and so afforded him passage.

A serving brother opened the gate for him. It was about dinner-time. The imbecile Heribald came running out of the monastery garden, curious to see the strange horseman. He pressed up close to the horse when Herr Spazzo dismounted. The watch-dog tugged at his chain, furiously barking at the chamberlain's steed, so that the animal reared; Herr Spazzo almost got hurt. When he had alighted on both feet, he seized his scabbard and dealt Heribald a blow over the back.

"It is not meant for you," cried he, stroking his beard; "it is for the watch-dog. Pass it on!"

Heribald stood there in amazement, and rubbed his shoulder.

"Holy Pirmin!" he wailed.

"To-day there is no Holy Pirmin," said Herr Spazzo in a decisive tone.

Then Heribald laughed, as if he knew his customer now.

"Eia, gracious lord, the Huns have also been here, and there was no one but Heribald to receive them; but they did not speak to him so wickedly as that."

"The Huns are no ducal chamberlains!" replied Herr Spazzo, haughtily.

In Heribald's weak mind the idea began to dawn that the Huns might not be the worst guests on German ground. He held his tongue, and returned to the garden, where he plucked some sage leaves and rubbed his back with them.

Herr Spazzo strode across the cloister-yard to the door which led through the cross-passage into the interior. He trod his heaviest. The dinner-bell was just ringing. One of the brothers now came quickly across the yard. Herr Spazzo seized him by his dark garment.

"Call down the abbot!" said he.

The monk stared at him in astonishment, and cast a side look at the chamberlain's worn hunting-suit. "It is the dinner hour!" he replied. "If you are invited, which, however . . ."

He looked again rather insolently at Herr Spazzo's

outward man, but was spared the end of his sentence ; the chamberlain dealt the hungry brother such a genuine cuff that he flew into the yard again like a well-aimed shuttle-cock. The mid-day sun shone on the smooth tonsure of the prostrate man.

The abbot had already been informed of the violent assault which the monastery-farmer had made on one of the duchess's subjects. He now heard the noise in the courtyard, and, on stepping up to his window, he was just in time to see the pious Brother Yvo sent flying out into the yard. "Blessed is he who knows the causes of things,"* says Vergil ; Abbot Wazmann did. He had seen Herr Spazzo's feathers nodding over at him with a threatening aspect from out the darkness of the corridor.

"Call down the abbot!" was again shouted up from the courtyard, so that the panes of the cell-windows rattled.

Meanwhile the soup was getting cold ; the brotherhood assembled in the refectory at last fell to, without waiting any longer for the abbot.

Abbot Wazmann had sent for Rudimann the cellarer.

"All this we surely owe to that green woodpecker of St. Gall ! O Gunzo, Gunzo ! No one ought to wish ill to his neighbor, but still I can not help questioning whether our strong-handed yeomen had not done better to hurl their stones at that hypocrite Ekkehard, rather than at the Hunnic wizard !"

* *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.*

VERGIL : Georgicon, lib. ii. 490.

A monk now shyly entered the abbot's room.

"You are desired to come down," said he in low accents. "There is some one down stairs who roars and grumbles like a man of war."

Then the abbot said to Rudimann the cellarer:

"It must be bad weather at the duchess's. I know the chamberlain; he is a perfect weather-cock. Whenever his mistress wears a smile round her haughty lips, then he laughs with his whole face; and when clouds gather on her brow, then a complete thunder-storm breaks out from him." . . .

" . . . and the lightning strikes," added Rudimann.

Heavy steps came echoing through the passage.

"There's no time to be lost," said the abbot. "Set out as quickly as you can, cellarer, and express our deep regret to the duchess. Take some silver coins out of the convent-box, as smart-money for the wounded man, and say that we will have prayers offered for his recovery. Off with you! you are his god-father and a clever man."

"It will be a difficult task," said Rudimann. "She will be downright spiteful."

"Take her a present," said the abbot. "Children and women are easily hoodwinked."

"What sort of a present?" Rudimann was about to ask, when the door was flung open, and Herr Spazzo came in. His face wore the right expression.

"By the life of my duchess!" he exclaimed. "Has the abbot of this rats' nest poured lead into his ears, or has the gout got hold of his feet? Why don't you come down to receive your visitors?"

"We are taken by surprise," said the abbot. "Let me welcome you now."

He lifted his right forefinger to give him the blessing.

"I need no such welcome!" returned Herr Spazzo. "The Devil is the patron-saint of this day. We have been insulted, grossly insulted! We exact a fine; two hundred pounds of silver at the least. Out with it! Murder and rebellion! The sovereign rights shall not be trampled upon by monastic insolence! We are an ambassador!"

He rattled his spurs on the floor.

"Excuse me," said the abbot; "we could not recognize the ambassador's garb in your gray hunting-jacket."

"By the camel's-hair raiment of John the Baptist!" cried Herr Spazzo, flaring up, "and if I were to come to you in my shirt, the garment would be good enough to appear as a herald before your black cowls!"

He put on his helmet again; the feathers nodded.

"Pay me, so that I may go at once. The air is bad here; bad, very bad indeed." . . .

"Allow me," said the abbot, "but we never permit a guest to depart in anger from our island. You are sharp because you have not yet dined. Don't disdain a meal at the monastery, and let us talk of business afterwards."

That a man in return for his rudeness was kindly pressed to stay to dinner made some impression on the chamberlain's mind. He took off his helmet again.

"The sovereign rights shall not be trampled upon by monastic insolence," he said once more.

But the abbot pointed across the court; there could be seen the open monastery kitchen. The flaxen-haired kitchen-boy was turning the spit before the fire and smacking his lips; for a lovely smell of the roast meat had just then entered his nostrils. Some covered dishes calling up pleasant anticipations were standing in the background; a monk, bearing a huge wine-jug, was just coming up from the cellar. The aspect was quite too tempting.

Herr Spazzo laid aside his official frown, and accepted the invitation.

When he had arrived at the third course, his insulting remarks were more infrequent. When the red Meersburger sparkled in his beaker, they ceased entirely. The red Meersburger was good.

Meanwhile Rudimann rode out of the monastery gate. The fisherman of Ermatingen had caught a gigantic salmon; fresh and splendid it lay in the cool cellar below. Rudimann had selected it as a suitable present for appeasing the duchess.

But before he set out he had found still something to do in the copying-room of the monastery. He took with him a lay-brother, who held the lake monster packed up in straw on the mule.

Herr Spazzo had come riding down in the haughtiest fashion; Rudimann went riding up most humbly. He spoke in low and modest accents when he asked for the duchess.

"She is in the garden," was the reply.

“And my pious confrater Ekkehard?” asked the cellarer.

“He has accompanied the wounded Cappan to his cottage on the Hohenstoffeln, where he is nursing him; he will not be home before night.”

“I am sorry for that,” said Rudimann, with a spiteful expression on his lips.

He had the salmon unpacked, and put on the granite table in the middle of the courtyard. The tall linden-tree threw its shade; the scales of the royal fish glittered, and it was as if its cool eyes still had life and were longingly looking down from the mountain-top to the blue waves below.

The fish was longer than a man: Praxedis screamed outright when its straw covers were taken off.

“He will not be home before night-fall,” muttered Rudimann, and he broke off a strong twig from the linden, and gagged the jaws of the salmon with it so that it gaped with cavernous mouth. With green leaves he carefully lined the inside, and then, plunging his hand into his bosom, he drew out the parchment leaves of Gunzo’s pasquil. He rolled them neatly together, and stuck them between the open jaws.

Praxedis watched him with curiosity.

Now the duchess came up. Rudimann humbly walked forward to meet her. He implored her indulgence for the convent’s vassals; he told her how sorry the abbot was; he spoke with appreciation of the wounded man; expressed his doubts about the possibility of weather-making; — pleading on the whole with success.

“And may an unworthy present show you at least the good will of your ever faithful Reichenau,” he said in conclusion, stepping aside, so that the salmon could be seen in full glory. The duchess smiled, half reconciled, and now her eye caught the parchment roll.

“And that?” said she, inquiringly.

“The latest production of literature!. . .” said Rudimann. With a deep bow he then took leave, went to his mule, and hastily set out again on his way home.

The red Meersburger was good, and Herr Spazzo did not regard it as a simple matter to sit at his wine. He persevered before the wine-jug like a general besieging a city; and he sat immovable on his bench, and drank like a man, earnestly, but much, leaving all loud demonstrations to younger persons.

“The red wine is the most sensible institution of the whole monastery. Have you got more of it in the cellar?” he said to the abbot when the first jug was emptied. His wanting to drink more was meant as a politeness, a sign of reconciliation. So the second jug was brought up.

“Without prejudice to our sovereign rights!” said he, grimly, as he clinked his beaker against the abbot’s.

“Certainly,” replied the latter, with a side-glance.

It was five o’clock; a bell rang through the monastery.

“Excuse me,” said the abbot, “we must now go to vespers; will you come with us?”

"I prefer waiting for you here," replied Herr Spazzo, casting a look into the dark neck of the wine-jug. It contained ample provision for at least another hour. So he let the monks sing their vespers, and drank on all alone.

Another hour had elapsed, and then he tried to remember for what reason he had ridden over to the monastery; he could not recollect it any more very clearly. The abbot now came back.

"How did you entertain yourself?" he asked.

"Very well," said Herr Spazzo. The jug was empty.

"I do not know about . . ." began the abbot.

"It's all right!" said Herr Spazzo, nodding his head.

Then the third jug was brought.

In the mean while Rudimann had returned home from his expedition. The evening sun was almost setting; the sky was all aglow; purple gleams of light fell through the narrow windows, on the carousing party.

As Herr Spazzo once more clinked his beaker against the abbot's, the red wine glistened like fiery gold, and he saw an aureole of light flickering round the abbot's head. He tried to collect his scattered wits.

"By the life of Hadwig,"²¹⁹ said he, solemnly, "who are you?"

The abbot did not understand him.

"What did you say?" he asked.

Then Herr Spazzo recognized the voice.

“Ah so,” cried he, striking the oak table with his fist. “The sovereign rights shall not be trampled upon by monastic insolence!”

“Certainly not,” rejoined the abbot.

Then the chamberlain felt a spasmodic pain in the forehead,²²⁰ which he knew well, and which he used to call *the waker*. The waker came only when he was sitting at his wine; and whenever it shot through his head, it was a signal that in half an hour later his tongue would be paralyzed, and speech would refuse to come. If the waker came for the second time, then his feet also were threatened with temporary paralysis.

So he arose.

“These cowl-bearers,” he said to himself, “shall not have the satisfaction of witnessing how their monastery wine shuts up the mouth of a ducal chamberlain.”

He stood quite firm on his feet.

“Stop,” said the abbot, “the stirrup-cup.”

Then came the fourth jug. Herr Spazzo had indeed got to his feet; but between rising and going a good many things may yet happen. He drank again. When he wanted to put down his beaker, he placed it deliberately in the empty air, so that it fell on the stone flags and smashed. Then Herr Spazzo got furious. All sorts of notions rushed tumultuously through his brains.

“Where have you got him?” cried he to the abbot.

“Whom?”

“The monastery-farmer! Out with him, the

coarse peasant, who tried to murder my god-child!"

He threateningly advanced toward the abbot. He made only one single false step.

"He is at the Schlangenhof," said the abbot, smiling. "I deliver him up to you; but you must go there yourself and fetch him."

"Murder and rebellion! We will fetch him!" blustered Herr Spazzo, and he slapped his sword as he strode toward the door. "We will drag him out of his bed, the sluggard! And when we have got him, by the knapsack of St. Gallus, if he . . . then . . . I can tell you . . ."

This speech was never ended. His tongue stood still, like the sun when Joshua commanded it during the battle with the Amorites.

He stretched out his hand for the abbot's cup, and drained it.

His speech did not return. A sweet placid smile settled on the chamberlain's lips. He stepped up to the abbot and embraced him.

"Friend and brother! dearly beloved old wine-jug! what if I were to dig out one of your eyes?" he tried to say with stammering tongue, but he could only utter some unintelligible sounds. He pressed the abbot vehemently to his bosom, and at the same time trod on his toes with his heavy boots.

Abbot Wazmann had been deliberating whether he should offer a bed for the night to his disabled guest; but the embrace, and the pain in his toes, caused him to change his mind. He provided that the chamberlain should set out on his return.

His horse stood saddled in the monastery yard. The weak-minded Heribald was sneaking about. He had got from the kitchen a large piece of tinder, which he intended to light, and stick in the nostrils of the chamberlain's horse, and thus revenge himself for his blow. Herr Spazzo now made his appearance. He had scraped together the last remains of his dignity. A servant with a burning torch lighted him on his way.

The abbot had taken leave of him at the upper door.

Herr Spazzo then bestrode his faithful steed Falada; but with equal celerity he glided down again on the other side. Heribald sprang to catch him; the chamberlain fell into his arms; the monk's bristly beard grazed the chamberlain's forehead.

"Art thou here also, hoddy-doddy,²²¹ my wise King Solomon?" stammered Herr Spazzo. "Be my friend!" He kissed him. Then Heribald lifted him on his horse, threw away his tinder, and placed his foot on it.

"Eia, gracious Lord!" cried he. "May you reach home safe and sound! You came to us in a different manner from the Huns, and so you ride away different also. And yet, they too understood how to drink wine."

Herr Spazzo pressed the steel cap down on his head, and tightly grasped the reins. Something was still weighing on his mind. He struggled with his heavy tongue. At last he recovered some of his lost strength. He raised himself in the stirrups, and his voice obeyed now.

“And the sovereign rights shall not be trampled upon by monastic insolence!” he cried, so that his voice rang loudly through the dark and silent monastery yard.

At that very moment Rudimann was informing the abbot of the success of his mission to the duchess.

Herr Spazzo rode away. To the servant who had accompanied him with the torch, he threw a gold ring, and this induced the torch-bearer to go on with him over the narrow causeway that led through the lake.

Soon he was on the main land; the cool night air fanned his heated face. He burst out laughing. The reins he held tightly clutched in his right hand. The moon was shining on the road. Dark clouds were gathering round the peaks of the Helvetic mountains. Herr Spazzo now entered the black pine-wood. Loudly and at measured intervals the cuckoo's voice rang through the silence.

Herr Spazzo laughed again. Was it some pleasant recollection, or longing hope for the future, which made him smile so sweetly?

He stopped his horse.

“When will the wedding be?” he called out to the tree where the cuckoo was sitting.²²² He counted the calls, but the cuckoo this time was indefatigable. Herr Spazzo had already come to number twelve, when his patience began to wane.

“Hold thy tongue, confounded bird!” he cried. But the cuckoo called out for the thirteenth time.

“We are forty-five years old already, and thirteen

makes it fifty-eight," angrily exclaimed Herr Spazzo. "That's too late for courting."

The cuckoo sang out for the fourteenth time. Another woke up and also raised its voice; a third one chimed in, and there was a chorus ringing and singing around the tipsy chamberlain, so that all counting became impossible.

Now his patience left him entirely.

"Miserable liars and cuckolds, and that's what you are!" cried he, furiously. "The devil take you altogether!"

He spurred his horse into a gallop. The wood shut round him thicker; now the clouds came up heavy and sinister. They were drifting toward the moon. It became dark as a pocket; the pine-trees stirred mysteriously; everything was black and still.

Willingly now would Herr Spazzo have listened to the cuckoo, but the nightly disturber of peace had flown away; a strange uncanny feeling crept over the solitary rider.

A formless cloud came stealthily creeping up to the moon, and soon covered her up entirely. Then Herr Spazzo recollected what his nurse had told him in his early infancy,—how the bad wolf Hati and Managarm the moon-dog persecuted the radiant orb. Looking up, he clearly recognized wolf and moon-dog now. They had the gentle comforter of the night in their jaws. Herr Spazzo shuddered. He drew his sword.

"*Vince luna!* conquer, O moon!" he cried at the top of his voice, and clashed his sword against his greaves. "*Vince luna, vince luna!*"²²³

His shouts were loud, and the clashing of the metal fierce, but the cloud-monsters did not loosen their hold on the moon; only the chamberlain's horse became frightened, and galloped at full speed through the dark wood with him.

When Herr Spazzo awoke the next morning, he found himself lying at the foot of the Hunnic mound. He saw his mantle lying on the meadow; his black mare Falada was far away at the edge of the forest, nibbling the young meadow flowers. The saddle was hanging under her belly, and the reins were torn.

Slowly the sleep-charged man turned his head, and looked about yawning. The monastery-tower of Reichenau was mirrored in the distant lake as peacefully as if nothing whatever had happened. He tore up a bunch of grass, and held the dewy blades to his forehead.

"*Vince luna!*" said he, with a bitter-sweet smile. He had a racking headache.

CHAPTER XIX.

BURKARD THE MONASTERY-PUPIL.

RUDIMANN the cellarer did not reckon without his host. A roll of parchment-leaves in the jaws of a salmon could not fail to beget curiosity. While Herr Spazzo was drinking the monastery-wine at Reichenau, his mistress and Praxedis sat in their private room puzzling out Gunzo's manuscript. Ekkehard's pupils had learned enough Latin to understand the principles; and what remained grammatically obscure they guessed at, and what they could not guess, they interpreted as well as they could.

Praxedis was indignant.

"Is the race of scholars then everywhere as they are at Byzantium?" she exclaimed. "First a gnat is metamorphosed into an elephant, and then a great war is waged against the monster they have themselves created. The present from the Reichenau is as sour as vinegar.

She puckered up her lovely mouth just as when she had tasted Wiborad's crab-apples.

Frau Hadwig was strangely moved. A certain something told her that the spirit which pervaded Gunzo's pages was not good; but yet she felt some satisfaction at Ekkehard's humiliation.

“I think that he has deserved this reprimand,” said she.

Then Praxedis leaped to her feet.

“Our worthy teacher needs many a reprimand,” she cried, “but that should be our business. If we manage to cure him of his shy awkwardness, then we shall do a good work; but if some one, with a beam in his eye, reproaches his neighbor with the moat in his, — that is too bad! The wicked monks have merely sent this to slander him. May I throw it out of the window, gracious mistress?”

“We have not requested you either to complete Ekkehard’s education, or to throw a present we have received out of the window,” said the duchess, sharply.

Praxedis was silent.

The duchess could not tear away her thoughts so easily from the elegant lampoon. Her ideas regarding the fair-haired monk had undergone a great change since the day on which he carried her over the monastery courtyard. Not to be understood in a moment of exuberant feeling is like being disdained. The sting forever remains. If her eyes now chanced to light on him, it did not make her heart beat any the quicker. Often it was pity which made her gaze kindly on him again, but not that sweet pity out of which love springs, like the lily out of the cool soil. It contained a bitter grain of contempt.

Through Gunzo’s satirical diatribe, even Ekkehard’s learning — which the women till then had been

wont to look up to — was dragged through the dust, — so what was there left to admire?

The duchess did not understand the silent working and dreaming of his soul; a delicate shyness seems foolishness in the eyes of others. His going out into the fields in the fresh morning to read the Song of Songs came too late. He should have done that the autumn before. . . .

The darkness of evening came on.

“Has Ekkehard returned home yet?” asked the duchess.

“No,” said Praxedis. “Neither has Herr Spazzo returned.”

“Then take the candle,” said Frau Hadwig, “and carry up the parchment-leaves to Ekkehard’s tower. He must not remain ignorant of his confrère’s works.”

The Greek maid obeyed, but unwillingly. In the tower room it was close and hot. Books and other things were strewn about in disorder. On the oak table the gospel of St. Matthew lay opened at the following verses: —

But when Herod’s birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.

Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, “Give me here John Baptist’s head on a charger. . . .”

The priestly stole, the duchess’s Christmas-gift to Ekkehard, lay beside it, the golden fringes hang-

ing over the little bottle with the Jordan water which the blind Thieto had given him.

Praxedis pushed them all back, and placed Gunzo's epistle on the table. When she had arranged everything, she felt sorry. Just as she was going, she turned back, opened the window, and, gathering a branch of the luxuriant ivy which twined round the tower, she threw it over the parchment-leaves.

Ekkehard came home very late. He had been nursing the wounded Cappan! but he found it far harder work to comfort his tall spouse. After the first wailing was over, and her tears were dried, her speech until sunset had been nothing but one single great curse against the monastery farmer; and when she raised her strong arm to heaven, and spoke of scratching his eyes out, of pouring henbane into his ears, and breaking his teeth, and her long brown braids threateningly fluttered in the air, it required a great amount of reasoning to quiet her.

Yet he succeeded at last.

In the silence of night, Ekkehard read the leaves which the Greek girl had put on his table. While his eyes took in the spiteful attacks of the Italian scholar, his hand played with a wild rose which he had plucked in the pine-wood on his way home.

"How is it," he thought, as he inhaled the fragrance of the flower, "that so much that is written with ink can not deny its origin? All ink is made of the gall-nut, and all gall-nuts spring from the poisonous sting of the wasp." . . .

With a serene countenance he finally laid aside the yellow parchment-leaves.

“A good work! a good piece of industrious work!— Oh, the hoopoe is also an important personage amongst the feathered tribe, but the nightingale has no ear for its singing.” . . .

He slept particularly well after he had read it.

As he was coming back from the castle-chapel the next morning, he met Praxedis in the courtyard.

“How are you, baptizer of Huns,” said she lightly. “I am really very anxious about you. I dreamt that a big brown crab came swimming up the Rhine, and from the Rhine into the Bodensee, and from the Bodensee he crawled up to our castle; and that he had a pair of sharp pincers, and he pinched you with them very badly. The crab’s name was Gunzo. Have you many more good friends like him?”

Ekkehard smiled.

“I displease many a man who does not please me either,” said he. “He who comes into contact with sooty kettles easily gets blackened himself.”

“But you seem to be wholly indifferent about it,” said Praxedis. “You ought to be thinking already about the reply. Boil the crab till it gets dark red; then he will not bite you again.”

“The answer to this,” replied Ekkehard, “has been given already by another: *Whosoever shall say to his brother, Ract, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*”

“You are right mild and pious,” said Praxedis, “but you can’t get on in the world with that. Whoever does not defend his skin will be flayed; and even a miserable enemy should not be considered

quite harmless. Seven wasps together will kill a horse, you know."

The Greek girl was right. Silent contempt of an unworthy antagonist is too easily interpreted as weakness. But Ekkehard acted according to his nature.

Praxedis came a step nearer to him, so that he started back in surprise.

"Shall I give you a good piece of advice, most reverend Master?" she asked.

He silently nodded.

"You have begun again to wander around far too solemnly. To look at you, one would think that you were going to play at nine-pins with the sun and moon. It is now hot summer; your cowl must be oppressive. Get yourself a linen garment, and, for my sake at least, let some of the castle spring water cool your head; but, above all, be merry and cheerful. The duchess might otherwise become indifferent toward you."

Ekkehard wanted to take her hand. Sometimes he felt as if Praxedis were his good angel. Just then Herr Spazzo came riding into the courtyard at a slow and lingering pace. His head was bent toward the pommel, and a leaden smile rested on his tired features. He was half asleep.

"Your face has undergone a great change since yesterday," cried Praxedis to him. "Why do the sparks not fly out any more from under Falada's hoofs?"

With vacant eyes, he looked down at her. Everything seemed dancing before him.

“Have you brought home considerable smart-money, Sir Chamberlain?” asked Praxedis.

“Smart-money? for whom?” stolidly asked Herr Spazzo.

“For poor Cappan! I believe you have eaten a handful of poppy-seed, and so know no longer why you rode out.” . . .

“Poppy-seed?” said Herr Spazzo, in the same drowsy tone. “Poppy-seed? No. But Meersburger, red Meersburger, monstrous quantities²²⁴ of red Meersburger, yes!”

He dismounted heavily, and retired into the privacy of his apartments. The report about the result of his mission was not given. Praxedis looked at the departing chamberlain; she did not wholly understand the cause of Herr Spazzo’s dull and heavy mental condition.

“Have you never heard that

*To the man who has crossed life's middle line
The mastery of herbs and flowers,
The knowledge of the hidden powers
In roots and stones and beetles' wings,
The woodland springs, the bird that sings,
Nor half so much refreshment brings
As good old wine,”*

said Ekkehard, finishing out the rude rhyme. “But the young Jewish prophet long ago said to King Darius, when his generals and officers were standing around his throne and disputing about which was the strongest: ‘The wine is the strongest of all! for it conquers the men who drink it, and leads their minds astray.’”

Praxedis had turned away, and was standing by the parapet.

“Do look, O day-star of science!” said she to Ekkehard. “Who is this dainty ecclesiastical little man who is coming up here?”

Ekkehard bent over the wall and looked down the perpendicular rocky hill-side. Between the shrubbery along the castle road walked a brown-haired boy; he wore a monk's habit, coming down to his ankles, sandals on his bare feet, a leathern knapsack on his back, and carried an iron-pointed staff in his hand. Ekkehard did not as yet recognize him.

After a while he reached the castle gate.

He shaded his eyes with his hand, and gazed over the wide beautiful landscape. Then he entered the courtyard and approached Ekkehard with measured steps.

It was Burkard the monastery-pupil, the son of Ekkehard's sister; he had come over from Constance to pay a holiday visit to his youthful uncle.

He made a solemn face, and pronounced his greeting as if he had learned it by heart.

Ekkehard embraced the well-behaved boy, who, in all the fifteen years of his life, had never done a single foolish thing. Burkard brought greetings from St. Gall, and an epistle from Master Ratpert, who, being engaged in collating manuscripts, asked Ekkehard's advice as to the style and wording in which he was wont to translate certain difficult passages in Vergil.

“Farewell, and progress in knowledge,” was the letter's parting salutation.²²⁵

Ekkehard began to question his nephew about all the brothers; but Praxedis soon interrupted him.

“Now let the pious young man rest first. A dry tongue likes not speech. Come with me, my little man; thou shalt be a more welcome visitor than the wicked Rudimann from the Reichenau!”

“Father Rudimann?” exclaimed the boy. “I know him also.”

“How?” asked Ekkehard

“He paid us a visit but a few days since, and brought a big letter to the abbot, and a treatise which they say contains a great deal about yourself, beloved uncle, and is not much in your praise.”

“Hear, hear!” said Praxedis.

“And when he had taken leave, he only went as far as the church, where he prayed till it was dark. Now he must have known every nook and corner in the monastery; for when the sleeping-bell sounded, he slunk on tiptoe to the great dormitory, in order to listen to what the brothers might say about you and the contents of the treatise. The night-light burnt but dimly, so that he could crouch down unseen in a dark corner. But about midnight, Father Notker Pfefferkorn, whose turn it was to make the round, came inspecting whether every one had fastened his girdle tidily round his garment, and whether any knife or other dangerous weapon was in the bedroom. He pulled out the stranger from his hiding-place; and the brothers woke up, and the big lantern was lighted, and they all rushed on him, armed with sticks and staves and scourges from the scourging-room, and there was a tremendous noise and uproar,

though the dean and the older monks tried to dissuade them. Notker Pfefferkorn was highly indignant: 'The devil goes about in disguise, seeking whom he may devour,' he cried; 'we have caught the devil: scourge him!'

"But Father Rudimann, in spite of all, was right impudent. 'I confess, O excellent youths,' said he, 'if I had known where the carpenter left some outlet, I should have crept away on my hands and knees; but now, when I have fallen into your hands *volens volens*, mind that you do not do your guest any harm!' ²²⁶ Then they all got quite furious, and dragged him out into the scourging-room; he had to go down on his knees and beg for mercy, before he was let off; and when finally the abbot said, 'We will let the fox go home to his den,' he expressed his thanks in very polite terms.

"On my way yesterday I met a cart laden with two big wine-tuns, which the driver told me were a present from the cellarer of the Reichenau in return for the friendly reception he had met with at St Gall. . . ."

"Of all this Herr Rudimann did not breathe a word when he called on us yesterday," said Praxedis. "For this story thou verily deservest a piece of gingerbread, my golden lad. Thou canst tell a story as well as one of thy elders."

"Oh," said the monastery-pupil, half offended, "that's nothing! But I am going to write a poem about it, entitled, 'The Wolf's Invasion of the Sheepfold, and his Punishment.' I have already got it half ready in my head. It will be fine!"

“Dost thou also make poems, my young nephew?” gayly asked Ekkehard.

“He would be a fine monastery-pupil indeed, who, being fourteen years old, could n’t make a poem!” was the boy’s reply. “My hymn in praise of the Archangel Michael, in double-rhymed hexameters, I was permitted to read to the abbot. He called my verses ‘a glittering string of pearls.’ And my Sapphic ode in honor of the pious Wiborad is likewise very pretty. Shall I recite it to you?”

“For Heaven’s sake!” cried Praxedis. “Dost thou think that one no sooner drops down into our courtyard than he begins at once reciting odes? Wait till thou hast eaten thy cake first.”

She ran off to the kitchen, leaving Ekkehard’s learned nephew to talk with his uncle under the linden-tree. He spoke a good deal about the *trivium* and *quadrivium*; and as the Hohentwiel just then cast a delicately drawn shadow on the plain below, the monastery-pupil indulged in a prolix discussion about the cause of all shadows, which he pronounced with great assurance to be a compact body standing in the way of light, demonstrating the vanity of all other definitions.

Like the waters from a fountain did the scientific flood stream forth from the youthful lips. In astronomy also he was quite at home, and his uncle had to listen patiently to the praise of Zoroaster of Bactria, and of King Ptolemæus of Egypt, and to undergo a strict examination himself about the shape and application of the astrolabe; ²²⁷ and finally the brown-headed nephew began to explain how absurd was the

opinion of those who believed that on the other side of the globe lived the honorable race of the antipodes! ²²⁸

All these fine things he had learned only five days before.

But at last his uncle did what the brave Emperor Otto did when the famous bishop of Rheims, and Otrich the cathedral schoolmaster of Magdeburg, held their great contest about the basis and classification of theoretical philosophy ²²⁹ before him and hundreds of learned abbots and scholars, — namely, he yawned.

Just then Praxedis reappeared with a splendid cherry-tart and a little basket of fruit, and these good things speedily turned the thoughts of the fifteen-year-old philosopher to the Natural. Like a well-trained boy, he first said grace ²³⁰ before eating, as was customary in the monastery-school; then he turned his attentions to the annihilation of the cherry-tart, and left the question of the antipodes to some future time. . . .

Praxedis turned to Ekkehard.

“The duchess bids me tell you,” she said, with mock earnestness, “that she feels inclined to return to the study of Vergil. She is anxious to learn the final fate of Queen Dido, — this very evening we are to begin again. Remember that you are to wear a cheerful expression,” she added, in a lower key; “this is a delicate attention in order to show you that in spite of the writings of a certain man, her confidence in your learning has not been destroyed.”

This was a fact; but Ekkehard was alarmed. To

be again together with the two women in the old way, — the mere thought was painful. He had not yet learnt to forget a certain Good Friday morning.

He slapped his nephew on the shoulder, so that it made him start.

“Burkard,” said he, “thou hast not come here to spend thy holidays fishing and bird-catching. This afternoon we will read Vergil with the gracious duchess, and thou shalt be present also.”

He thought to place the boy like a shield between the duchess and his thoughts.

“Very well,” replied Burkard, with cherry-dyed lips. “I much prefer Vergil to hunting and riding, and I shall request the lady duchess to teach me some Greek. After that visit when they took you away with them, the cloister-pupils often said that she knew more Greek than all the venerable fathers of the monastery put together. They say she learnt it by sorcery. . . . And although I am the first in Greek . . .”

“Then you will certainly be abbot in five years, and in twenty years holy father at Rome,” said Praxedis, mockingly. “Meanwhile the castle spring is running yonder, and you would do well to wash the blue from your lips.”

At four o'clock that afternoon Ekkehard was waiting in his mistress's pillared hall, ready to resume his reading of the *Æneid*. More than six months had gone by during which Vergil had been laid aside. Ekkehard felt oppressed. He flung the windows wide open; the pleasant afternoon coolness came streaming in.

The monastery-pupil was turning over the leaves of the Latin manuscript.

"When the duchess speaks to thee, be very polite," said Ekkehard.

But he replied with a complacent air: "With such a grand lady, I shall speak only in verse. She shall see that a pupil from the inner school stands before her."

Here the duchess entered, followed by Praxedis. She greeted Ekkehard with a slight bend of the head. Without appearing to notice Ekkehard's hopeful nephew, she sat down in her richly carved arm-chair. Burkard had made her a graceful bow, and took his place at the lower end of the table.

Ekkehard opened the book. Then the duchess asked, in an indifferent tone:—

"Why is that boy here?"

"He is but a humble auditor," said Ekkehard, "who, inspired by the wish to learn Greek, ventures to approach such a noble teacher. He would be very happy if from your lips . . ."

But before Ekkehard had ended his speech, Burkard had approached the duchess. With eyes cast down, and a mixture of shyness and confidence, he said with a clear intonation of the rhythm:—

*esse velim Graecus, cum vix sim, dom'na, Latinus.** 231

It was a faultless hexameter.

Frau Hadwig listened with astonishment; for a curly-headed boy who could make an hexameter was an unheard-of thing in the Alemannic lands. And

* *Lady, fain would I be a Greek ere fully a Latin'st.*

moreover, he had improvised the dactyls and spondees in her honor. Therefore she was really pleased with the youthful verse-maker.

“Let me look at thee a little nearer,” said she, drawing him toward her. She was charmed with him; for he had a lovely boyish face, with a red and white complexion, so soft and transparent that the blue veins could be seen through it.

In luxuriant masses the brown curls fell down over his temples; a bold aquiline nose rose over the learned young lips, as if it were mocking what came forth from them. Then Frau Hadwig put her arms round the boy, lifted him up, and kissed him on both lips and cheeks, fondled him almost like a child, and finally, pushing a cushioned footstool close to her side, bade him sit down on it.

“To begin with, thou shalt gather something else than Greek wisdom from my lips,” said she jestingly, giving him another kiss. “But now be a good boy, and quickly say some more well-set verses.”

She pushed back his curls. The monastery-pupil’s face was blushing; but his metrical powers were not discomposed even by the kiss of a duchess. Ekkehard had stepped up to the window, and was looking out toward the Alps. But Burkard, without hesitation, recited the following lines:—

*non possum prorsus dignos componere versus,
nam nimis expavi duce me libante suavi.**

He had again produced two faultless hexameters.

* *Worthy verses my lips refuse to compose any longer,
For a lovely duchess’s kiss has filled me with terror.*

The duchess laughed out gayly.

"I verily believe that thou didst greet the light of this world with a Latin verse. It has the ring and flow as if Vergil had arisen from his grave. But why art thou terrified when I kiss thee?"

"Because you are so grand and proud and beautiful," said the boy.

"Never mind," replied the duchess. "He who, with the fresh kiss yet glowing on his lips, can improvise such perfect verses, can not be very much terrified."

She made him stand up before her. "And why art thou so very eager to learn Greek?"

"Because they say that if a man knows Greek, he can become so clever as to hear the grass grow," was the ready answer. "Ever since my fellow-pupil the thick-lipped Notker has vaunted himself that he was going to learn all Aristotle by heart and then translate it into German, I have had no more peace of mind."

Frau Hadwig again laughed merrily. "Let us begin, then? Dost thou know the antiphon, 'Ye seas and rivers, praise ye the Lord'?"

"Yes," said Burkard.

"Then repeat after me, '*thálassi kè potamí, eulógite ton Kýrion!*'"

The boy repeated it.

"Now sing it!"

He did so.

Ekkehard looked over reproachfully at them. The duchess understood the look.

"So now thou hast learnt six words already," she

said to Burkard, "and as soon as thou wilt ask for it in hexameters, thou shalt be taught some more. Now sit down here at my feet, and listen attentively. We will read Vergil now."

Then Ekkehard began the fourth canto of the *Æneid*; and read of the sorrows of Dido, and how she was ever beset by thoughts of the noble Trojan guest, whose words and looks are all deeply engraven on her inmost heart. And she speaks out her grief thus to her sister:—

*If I had not in my inmost soul immutably stablished
Solemn vows that I never again would submit unto wedlock,
After my first sweet love had been in death disappointed;—
Were not the thought of the nuptial couch and the torches re-
pugnant,
Possibly unto this single fault my heart might have yielded.
Anna! I will confess that since my consort Sichæus
Wretchedly fell 'neath a brother's hand, and the altars were
blood-stained,
This is the only man who has thrilled me, or shaken my purpose.
Down in the dead cold ashes the fire of passion still smoulders.**

But Frau Hadwig had not much sympathy with the sorrows of the widowed Carthaginian queen. She leaned back in her arm-chair and looked up at the ceiling. She no longer found any similarity between herself and the woman in the poem.

"Stop!" she cried. "Here again it is clear that a man wrote that. He wants to humiliate women! It is all false! Who on earth would make such a fool of herself over an utter stranger?"

* *Æneid* iv. 15-23.

“Vergil has to answer for that,” said Ekkehard.
 “History may have bequeathed the facts to him.”

“Then the present generation of women is stronger,” said the duchess, and she signed to him to continue. She was almost offended with Vergil’s description, perhaps because she was reminded of certain Didonian feelings which she had experienced herself. It had not always been as it was now.

And he read on how Anna advises her sister not to struggle any longer against the agreeable passion; and how, in spite of prayers and sacrifices on the altars of the gods, peace and happiness flee from her, and meantime the soft flame devours in the very marrow of her bones, and the silent wound keeps alive in her breast.

And the poor deluded woman desires again to hear of the battles round Ilium, and hangs on the voice of the narrator: —

*After the guests were gone, and the moon shone dim through
 the darkness,*

*Late in the night, when the setting stars invite men to slumber,
 Lone in the silent hall she mourns, the couch he had gone from
 Claspings with passionate arms. Though absent, she sees him,
 she hears him.*

*Under the spell of the likeness which to his sire she discovers,
 Oft would she fondle the boy to beguile the terrible yearning.*

A low giggle interrupted the reading. The monastery-pupil, sitting at the duchess’s feet, nestled close to the folds of her dress, had been listening attentively until now, when he struggled to stifle a rising laugh; it was in vain: he exploded, and covered up his face with his hands to keep it back.

“What is the matter now, young verse-maker?” asked Frau Hadwig. .

“I could not help thinking,” said the boy, in some embarrassment, “that if my gracious mistress were the queen Dido, I should have been acting the part of Ascanius, when you deigned to kiss and caress me.”

The duchess looked down sharply at the boy. “Is he inclined to be naughty? No wonder,” added she, pointing at his curls; “for the young Master Precocity has already got gray hairs on his pate.”

. . . “That is from the night when they killed Romeias, . . .” the monastery-pupil started to say.

“That comes from thy forwardness,” interrupted the duchess, “which makes thee say foolish things when thou hadst better be silent. Stand up, little man!”

Burkard rose from the stool, and stood blushing before her.

“So,” said she, “now go to the maiden Praxedis, and tell her that as a punishment all thy gray hairs are to be cut off, and beg her prettily to do it for thee. That will be a good cure for untimely laughter.”

The bright tears stood in the boy’s eyes, but he dared make no protest. So he went up to Praxedis, who felt sympathy for him, since she had heard that he had been Romeias’s companion during his last hours.

“I will not hurt thee, my little saint,” she whispered, as she drew him toward her. He knelt down

before her, bending his young head over her lap; she took a big pair of scissors out of her straw-braided work-basket, and executed the punishment.

At first the monastery-pupil's sobs sounded dolefully, for he who allowed a strange hand to touch his locks was considered to be deeply dishonored; ²³² but Praxedis's soft little hand caressingly patted his cheeks, after having ruffled his curls, and in spite of punishment he felt such a strange sensation that his mouth smilingly caught the last falling tear.

Ekkehard looked down silently for a while. The play of graceful Frivolity makes the sad sadder. He was offended because the duchess had thus interrupted his reading. He found no consolation in her eyes.

"She is trifling with thee, just as she trifles with the boy," said he to himself; and he closed the Vergil and rose from his seat.

"You are right," said he to Frau Hadwig, "'t is all wrong. Dido ought to laugh, and Æneas to go and fall on his sword. Then it would be quite natural."

She gazed at him with an unsteady look.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked.

"I can not read any more," he replied.

The duchess had risen also.

"If you do not care to read any longer," she said, with an apparently indifferent expression, "there are still other ways and means to while away our time pleasantly. How would it be if I were to impose it upon you to tell us some graceful tale, — you might choose whatever you liked. There are still

many grand and beautiful things besides your Vergil. Or, go and write a poem yourself. Some burden oppresses you. You do not care to confide it to any one. You do not like to go out into the country. Everything hurts your eyes; your mind lacks some great task; we will give you one."

"What poem could I write?" replied Ekkehard. "Is it not enough happiness to be the echo of a master like Vergil?"

He looked with veiled eyes at the duchess.

"I should only be able to chant elegies, — very sad ones."

"Nothing else?" said Frau Hadwig, reproachfully. "Have not our ancestors gone out to war, and have not their trumpets sounded the alarum through the world, and have they not fought battles as grand as those of the vagrant Æneas? Do you believe that the great Emperor Karl would have had all the old national songs collected and sung if they had been nothing but chaff? Must you then, take everything out of your Latin books?"

"I know nothing," repeated Ekkehard.

"But you *must* know something," persisted the duchess. "If we who live here in this castle were to sit together of an evening and talk of old tales and legends, it would be strange indeed if we should not produce something more than the whole Æneid contains. 'T is true, the pious son of the Emperor Karl did not care any more for the old heroic songs, ²³³ and preferred listening to whining psalms, and died diseased in body and mind; but all of us from the days of our childhood still cling to those old

tales. Tell us such a story, Master Ekkehard, and we will gladly spare you your Vergil, with his love-sick queen Dido."

But Ekkehard's thoughts were quite differently occupied. He shook his head like one who is dreaming.

"I see you want some stimulant," said the duchess. "Above all, a good example will inspire you. Praxedis, prepare thyself, and likewise tell our chamberlain Spazzo that we are going to entertain ourselves to-morrow with the telling of old legends. Let every one be well prepared."

She took up the Vergil and flung it under the table, as a sign that a new era was to begin.

Her idea was certainly good and well conceived. Only the monastery-pupil, who had been resting his head on Praxedis's lap whilst the duchess spoke, had not quite taken in her meaning.

"When may I learn some more Greek, gracious mistress?" asked he. "Thálassi kè potamí."

"When the gray hairs are grown again," said she, gayly, giving him another kiss.

Ekkehard left the hall with hasty steps.

CHAPTER XX.

OLD GERMAN LEGENDS.

ON the top of the Hohentwiel, and within the castle-walls, a pretty little garden had been laid out on a steep projecting spur, encircled by a wall. It was a fine spot, like a look-out tower; for the crag descended precipitously, so that by leaning over the parapet one could throw a stone down into the valley below, and he who delighted in a wide view had a prospect of mountain and plain and lake and Alpine peaks; no obstacle shut off the view.

In one corner of this little garden was an old maple-tree, with its branches contentedly swaying in the breeze. Its winged seeds, already ripe and brown, were fluttering down on the black garden earth below. A ladder had been placed against its grayish green trunk, at the foot of which stood Praxedis, holding the corner of a long and heavy piece of tent-cloth; while Burkard, the monastery-pupil, was sitting on a limb, trying to fasten the other ends with the help of a hammer and some nails.

“Attention!” cried Praxedis. “I believe thou art watching that stork flying over to the church tower of Radolfzell. Take care, thou paragon of

all Latin scholars, and do not drive the nail into the air!"

Praxedis had been holding the cloth up with her left hand, and when the monastery-pupil let go the other end, it fell down heavily, tearing out the badly fixed nails, and almost entirely burying the Greek girl under its massy folds.

"There, now, — bungler!" scolded Praxedis, as soon as she had got out of the coarse entanglement. "I shall have to see whether there are not any more gray hairs to be cut off!"

Scarcely had she pronounced the last word, when the monastery-pupil became visible on the ladder; he climbed down half-way, then sprang lightly to the ground, and stood on the cloth before Praxedis.

"Sit down," said he; "I'd like to be punished again. I dreamt last night that you cut off all my hair, and that I had returned to school with an entirely bald head,—and I was not sorry for it at all."

Praxedis gave him a light tap on his head.

"Don't grow too impudent during the holidays, little man; or thy back will become floor for the rod to dance on, when thou gettest back to school again."

But the monastery-pupil was not thinking of the cool shades of his recitation-room. He remained standing motionless before Praxedis.

"Well?" said she, "what is the matter? what dost thou want?"

"A kiss," replied the pupil of the liberal arts.

"Listen to the little wren!" laughed Praxedis.

“What reasons has thy wisdom for such a demand?”

“The lady duchess did so,” said Burkard, “and you have asked me more than a dozen times to tell you all about that day when I fled with my old friend Romeias before the Huns, and how he fought like a hero as he was. I will not tell you this unless you will give me a kiss.”

“Listen,” said the Greek maid, with a mock serious face; “I have something very wonderful to tell you.”

“What?” asked the boy, eagerly.

“That thou art the naughtiest little rascal that ever set his foot on the threshold of a cloister-school,” continued she; and suddenly throwing her white arms around him, she gave him a hearty kiss on the nose.

“Well done, I declare!” called out a deep bass voice from the garden-door, at the very moment that she was playfully pushing the boy away from her. It was Master Spazzo.

“Thank you,” said Praxedis, perfectly unabashed. “You are just in time, Sir Chamberlain, to assist us in fixing this canvas. I shall never get it done with that silly boy!”

“So it appears,” said Herr Spazzo, with a cutting look at the monastery-pupil, who, having a sense of awe at the chamberlain’s fierce-looking mustache, slipped away between some rose-bushes. Astronomy and the metrics, Aristotle in the original, and red girlish lips danced in a strange confused medley through the youthful mind.

“Are there no better men to kiss in this castle, gentle maiden?” asked Herr Spazzo.

“If one should ever feel so inclined,” was Praxedis’s answer, “the better men ride away and wander about in night and mist; and when they return in daylight, they look as if they had been chasing the will-o’-the-wisps.”

Herr Spazzo got his answer. He had made a vow not by a single word to betray his night ride; cuckoo, and *vince luna* included.

“In what way can I help you?” he asked humbly.

“In making a bower,” said Praxedis. “In the cool hours of the evening the duchess is going to hold court here, and stories are to be told; old stories, Sir Chamberlain, the more wonderful, the better! Our mistress has grown tired of Latin, and wishes for something else. Something original, in the vernacular, . . . you also are expected to contribute your mite!”

“The Lord protect my soul!” exclaimed Herr Spazzo. “If under the reign of a woman everything was not wondrous strange, I really should begin to wonder at this. Are there no wandering minstrels and lute-players left, who, for a helmet full of wine and a leg of venison, will sing themselves hoarse with such tales? We are rising in estimation! ‘Vagabonds, jugglers, bards, and the like strolling idlers, are to be flogged, and if they complain, they are to receive a man’s shadow on a wall, as an indemnification.’²³⁴ I thank you for this honor!”

“You will do what you are commanded like a faithful vassal, who, moreover, has still to render a report about a certain business transacted over the monastic wine-jug,” said Praxedis. “It will be merrier, at any rate, than spelling out Latin! Have you no desire to out-rival the learned Herr Ekkehard?”

This hint made some impression on the chamberlain’s mind.

“Give me the corners of the cloth,” said he, “so that I may spread them like a tent.”

He climbed upon the maple, and fastened the ends to the branches. Opposite were some tall bean-poles, entwined with blue blossoms. To these, Praxedis tied the other two corners, and very soon the grayish white canvas made a pleasant contrast with the green foliage; it made a gay awning.

“It would be a very cosy place for drinking the vesper wine,” said Herr Spazzo, half sadly, at the idea of what was to come.

Praxedis, meanwhile, arranged the table and seats: the duchess’s stuffed arm-chair, with the finely carved openwork, with its back against the stem of the maple-tree; low stools for the others. She brought down her lute, and put it on the table; she ordered Burkard to make a huge nosegay, and this she put at the duchess’s place. Then she tied a red silk string around the trunk, carried it over to the bean-hedge, and from there to the wall, so as to leave free only a narrow entrance.

“There,” said she, with satisfaction; “now our fairy-hall is hedged in, like King Laurins’s ²²⁵ rose-

garden. The walls did not cost very much to make."

The duchess was pleased with her idea, and adorned herself with some care. It was early in the afternoon when she went down to the bower. She was a dazzling apparition as she proudly sailed along in her flowing robes. The sleeves and seams were richly embroidered with gold; and a steel-gray garment, held by jewelled clasps, fell down to the ground like a mantle. On her head she wore a soft transparent tissue, a sort of veil fastened to a golden head-band. Pulling out a rose from Burkard's nosegay, she stuck it in between the head-band and the veil.

The monastery-pupil, who was fast forgetting his classics and liberal arts, had begged leave to carry the duchess's train; and it was in her honor that he had donned a pair of monstrous pointed shoes, adorned on both sides with ears.²⁸⁶ He certainly felt a good deal elated at the happiness of serving as page to such a mistress.

Praxedis and Herr Spazzo came in after her. The duchess cast a hasty look about.

"Is Master Ekkehard — for whose especial benefit we have appointed this evening — not to be seen?"

He had not yet put in an appearance.

"My uncle must be ill," said Burkard. "He paced up and down in his room with long strides yesterday evening; and when I wanted to show him the different constellations, such as the Bear, and Orion, and the faintly glittering Pleiades, he gave me no answer whatever. At last he threw himself on his

couch with all his clothes on, and talked a good deal in his sleep."

"What did he say?" asked the duchess.

"He said:—

*"O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock,
and in the covert of the steep place.*

*"Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice.
For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is lovely.
And another time he said: Why dost thou kiss the
boy before my eyes? what do I hope still, and why
do I tarry yet in the Lybian lands?"*

"That is a nice state of things, I declare," whispered Herr Spazzo into the Greek girl's ear. "Does that rest on *your* conscience?"

But the duchess said to Burkard: "Thou must have been dreaming thyself. Run up to thy uncle, and make him come down, as we are waiting for him."

She sat down gracefully on her throne-like seat. The monastery-pupil soon came back with Ekkehard, who was looking very pale; his eyes had something wild and sad about them. He silently bowed his head, and then sat down at the opposite end of the table. Burkard wanted to place his stool again at the duchess's feet, as he had done the day before, when they had read Vergil; but Ekkehard rose and pulled him over by the hand.

"Come hither!" said he. The duchess let him do as he wished.

She looked around the circle.

"We maintained yesterday," said she, "that in our German legends and tales there was as much

good matter for entertainment as the Romans had in their epic of Æneas; and undoubtedly each one of us knows something of swift heroic battles, and the storming of strong fortresses; of the separation of faithful lovers, and the dissensions of mighty kings. The human heart has many and varied tastes, so that what does not interest one may please another. Therefore we have made the arrangement that each of our faithful subjects, as the lot will decide, shall relate some graceful tale; and it will then be our task to allot a prize for the best story. If one of you men should be the conqueror, he shall have the ancient drinking-horn which from the time of King Dagobert has been hanging in the great hall; and if my faithful Praxedis should be the victor, some pretty trinket is to be her reward. The pulling of straws shall decide who is to begin."

Praxedis had prepared four blades of grass of different lengths, which she handed to the duchess.

"Shall I add another for the young verse artist?" she asked.

But Burkard said in a doleful voice:—

"I beseech you, spare me; for, if my teacher at St. Gall were to hear that I had again diverted myself with idle tales, I should certainly be punished, as I was when we acted the story of the old Hildebrand and his son Hadubrand, in Romeias's room. The watchman always delighted in it, and he himself made our wooden horses and long triangular shields with his own hands. I was the son Hadubrand, and my fellow-pupil Notker acted old Hildebrand, because his underlip was as big as an old man's. And we

flew at each other so that a cloud of dust floated out of Romeiás's windows. Notker had just unfastened his arm-ring, and was holding it out to me for a gift, as the old song describes it,²³⁷ and I was just saying:

*Hoho, thou old rooster!
 Thou art really too cunning.
 Wilt thou with thy words beguile me?
 Wilt thou hurl thy spear at me?
 Has thy head become hoary with treachery and lying?
 Seafaring men from the westward
 From across the Wendelsee told me:
 He was killed in the wars.
 Dead is Hildebrand, Heribrand's father.*

"Then Herr Ratolt, our teacher of rhetoric, came sneaking up, sprang in between us, and belabored us so fiercely with his large rod that horse and sword and shield fell out of our hands.

"He called Romeias a stupid old sluggard for decoying us from useful studies, and my friend Notker and myself were locked up for three days on bread and water, and as a punishment for our Hildebrand play each of us had to make a hundred and fifty Latin hexameters in honor of St. Othmar."

The duchess smiled.

"God forbid that we should tempt thee again to such a sin!" said she.

She took the four grass-blades in her right hand, and smilingly held them out for the others to draw. Ekkehard's eyes, as he stepped up to her, were fixed immovably on the rose under her head-band. She had to speak to him twice before he pulled out a straw.

Herr Spazzo almost ejaculated, "Death and damnation!" for he had got hold of the shortest straw. But he well knew that no excuse would be available, and he looked pathetically down into the valley, as if he expected some escape in that direction. Praxedis had tuned her lute, and was playing a prelude that blended sweetly with the rustling of the branches in the old maple-tree.

"Our chamberlain has to fear no punishment if he will relate us some pretty story," said the duchess. "Now, then."

Herr Spazzo bent his head forward, put his sword with its broad hilt before him, so that he could lean on it, gave a preliminary stroke to his beard, and thus began:—

THE CHAMBERLAIN'S STORY.

"Although I have never taken much delight in old stories, and prefer to hear the clashing of two good swords, or the tapping of a full tun of wine, I yet once chanced to come across a fine legend. In my younger days I had to make a journey down into Italy, and my road took me through the Tyrol and over the Brennerberg; and it was a rough and stony bridle-path, leading me over precipice and glen, so that my horse lost a shoe. And when evening came I had reached a little village called Gothensass, or Gloggensachsen, which from the times of Herr Dietrich of Bern has lain there hidden in the larch-wood. At the outskirts of this village, and built against the mountain, there was a house, much resembling a

stronghold; and in front of it lay heaps of iron slag, and inside there was a big fire, and some one was lustily pounding the anvil.

“So I called to the blacksmith to come forth and shoe my horse; and when no one stirred, I knocked at the door with the but-end of my lance, so that it flew wide open, and at the same time I gave vent to some tremendous curse of death and murder and all that was bad. Suddenly a man stood before me with shaggy hair and a black leathern apron; and scarcely had I set eyes on him when my lance was already beaten down, so that it broke to pieces as if it had been mere glass, and an iron bar was swung threateningly over my head; and on the man’s naked arms swelled sinews, which looked as if he could strike an anvil sixteen fathom deep into the ground.

“Then I came to the conclusion that under such circumstances a polite speech might not come amiss, and so I said, ‘I merely wanted to ask of you the favor of shoeing my horse.’

“Whereupon the blacksmith drove his iron bar into the ground and said: ‘That sounds different, and will help you. But rudeness will attain nothing at Weland’s forge. You may tell that to your people at home.’

“He shod my horse, and I saw that he was an honorable blacksmith; and we became very good friends, and I let my horse be put into his stable, and remained his guest for the night. And we drank together till late; and the wine was called Terlaner, and he poured it out of a leathern bottle.

“While we were drinking, I asked my sooty host about his forge, and how it got its name; he laughed boisterously, and told me the story of ‘Smith Weland.’ It was not elegant, but it was fine!”

Herr Spazzo stopped a while, and cast a glance at the table, like one who looks about for a draught of wine to moisten his dry lips with. But there was none at hand, and the glance was not understood. So he continued:—

“Whence smith Weland had come, said the man of Gothensass to me, was never known in that region. They say that in the northern seas, in the land of Schonen, the giant Vade was his father, and that his grandmother was a mermaid, who, when he was born, came up from the depth of the sea, and sat a whole night on a rock, and sang to her harp, ‘Young Weland must be a blacksmith.’ So Vade brought the boy to Mimer, the famous armorer, who lived in the dark forest, twenty miles back of Toledo, and who instructed him in all the branches of his art.

“But after he had forged his first sword, Mimer himself advised him to go and acquire the last finishing touch in his craft amongst the dwarfs, and Weland went to the dwarfs and became much renowned.

“Then the giants invaded dwarf-land; so Weland had to escape, and he had nothing left except his broad sword Mimung, which he buckled across his back, and came to the Tyrol. Between the Eisack, Etsch, and Inn, there reigned in those days King Elberich, who received Weland kindly, and

gave him the forest smithy on the Brenner; and all the iron and ore, and everything that was hidden in the mountain's veins, was all Weland's. And Weland was contented and happy in the Tyrolese mountains. The mountain-torrents rushed past him, and drove his mill-wheels; the tempest fanned his fire, and the stars said, 'We must do our best, or the sparks which Weland produces will outshine us.'

"Thus Weland's work prospered. Shields and swords, knives and drinking-cups, and whatever ornaments adorn a king's palace, were made by his dexterous hands, and there was no smith, however far the sun might shine on Alpine snow, who could compare with him.

"But Elberich had many bitter enemies, and they formed an alliance, and took the one-eyed Amilias for their leader, and invaded the land. And Elberich's heart was filled with dismay, and he said:—

"'Whoever will bring me Amilias's head shall marry my only daughter.'

"Then Weland extinguished the fire in his forge, buckled on his broad sword Mimung, and went out to fight Elberich's enemies. And his sword was good, and cut off Amilias's head; so all the enemies turned round and fled up hill and down dale homeward, and Weland brought the head to his king. But he said angrily:—

"'What I have promised concerning my daughter the winds have scattered; a smith can never become my son-in-law; he would smut my hands when he gave me his greeting. But thou shalt have three gold coins as a reward. With these a man can tilt

and joust, dance and prance, put on airs and go to fairs, and buy himself a wench in the market.'

"Weland threw the three golden coins at his feet, so that they rolled under the throne, and he said: 'God bless you; may we never meet again!'* and turned round to leave the land.

"But the king did not want to lose the smith, so he had him thrown to the ground, and the tendons of his leg cut, so that he became lame, and had to give up all thoughts of flight.

"And Weland dragged himself gloomily home to his forge, and relighted his fire; but he whistled and sang no more when he wielded the heavy hammer, and his mind was embittered. Then once on a time came the king's son, a red-cheeked boy, who had run out alone into the wood, and he said:—

"'Weland, I want to look at thy work.'

"Then the smith artfully replied:—

"'Stand close to the anvil; there thou wilt see everything best;' and he took the red-hot iron bar out of the flames and stabbed the king's son right through the heart with it. He bleached the bones and covered the joints with copper and silver, and made them into candlesticks, and he encircled the skull with gold, making it into a drinking-cup. All this Weland sent to Elberich; and when the messengers came to inquire for the boy, he said:—

"'I have not seen him; he must have run out into the woods.'

"About the same time the king's daughter was walking in her garden. She was so beautiful that

* *Auf Nimmerwiederschen.*

the lilies bowed their heads before her. On her forefinger she wore a ring of gold, shaped like a serpent, and in the head of it a carbuncle glistened. Elberich himself had placed it there, and he held this ring far dearer than a kingdom, and had given it to his daughter only because he loved her above everything. As she was plucking a rose, the ring fell from the maiden's finger, and it went rolling sparkling over the stones and broke, and the carbuncle fell out of its golden setting, so that the maiden wrung her hands and lamented bitterly, and would not go home for fear of her father's anger.

“Then her waiting-women said:—

“‘Go secretly to smith Weland, and he will mend it for you.’

“So the king's daughter entered Weland's smithy, and told him her grief. He took the ring and put it together, and mended it with molten gold, and the carbuncle was soon sparkling again from the serpent's head. But Weland's forehead wore a dark frown; and when the maiden kindly smiled at him, and turned to go, he said:—

“‘Hei! how darest thou come to me all unbeknown!’ And he shut to the strong door, and locked it and bolted it, and he seized the king's daughter with strong arms and carried her into his chamber, where moss and fern-leaves lay heaped up. And when she went away she wept, and tore her soft silken hair . . .”

A slight noise interrupted Herr Spazzo. Praxedis had cast an inquiring look at the duchess, to see

whether she should not jump up with a becoming blush, and close Herr Spazzo's mouth ; but as nothing was to be read in her calm, set features, she was impatiently drumming with her fingers on the back of her lute.

“ . . . and a deed of violence had been done,” continued Herr Spazzo, unabashed. “ Then Weland set up such a singing and shouting as the forge had not heard since his tendons had been cut. Leaving his shields and swords unfinished, he worked day and night, and forged for himself a pair of great wings ; and he had hardly finished them when Elberich came down the Brenner with armed men. Then Weland fastened on his wings, and hung on his sword Mimung, and mounted the roof of his house, so that the men exclaimed : —

“ ‘ Look ! smith Weland has become a bird ! ’

“ But he shouted with a powerful voice from the tower : ‘ May God bless you, King Elberich ! You will remember the smith ! He has slain your son ; your daughter is with child by him. Farewell, and give her my greetings ! ’

“ This he said, and his huge wings spread out and roared like a storm-wind, and he flew through the air.

“ The king seized his bow, and all the knights in grim haste drew back their arrows to the notch. Like an army of flying dragons the arrows shot after him ; but not one of them hit him, and he flew home to Schonen to his father's castle, and was not seen again. And Elberich never gave Weland's message to his daughter ; but that same year she

gave birth to a son, who was called Wittich, and became a strong hero like his father.

“That is the end of the story of Weland!”²³⁸

Herr Spazzo leaned back, and drew a long breath of relief. “They will not trouble me a second time for a story, I warrant,” thought he.

The impression which the story left was varied. The duchess expressed herself well satisfied with it. She approved of the smith’s revenge. Praxedis indignantly declared it was truly a sooty smith’s story, and that the chamberlain ought to be forbidden to show himself before women! Ekkehard said: “I don’t know, but it seems to me as if I had once heard something like it; but then the king’s name was Nidung, and the forge was on the Caucasus.”

Then the chamberlain called out angrily: “If you prefer the Caucasus to Gloggensachsen, very well, then you may lay the scene there; but I well recollect how my Tyrolese friend showed me the very spot.²³⁹ Over the chamber door there was a broken rose of metal, and on the tower an iron eagle-wing, and below it were engraved the words, ‘From here the smith flew away.’ Now and then people come there on a pilgrimage to pray, and they believe Weland to have been a great saint.”²⁴⁰

“Now let us see who will out-rival Herr Spazzo,” said the duchess, once more mixing the lots. They drew; the shortest remained with Praxedis. She neither appeared embarrassed, nor did she appeal to the indulgence of her listeners. Passing her white hand over her dark tresses, she began: —

PRAXEDIS'S STORY.

“It is true that my nurses never sang me any cradle songs about old giants, and, thank God, I have never been in forest smithies; but even in Constantinople you may hear such tales recited; and when I was instructed at the emperor's court in all the arts well becoming a serving-maiden, there was an old woman who kept the keys. Her name was Glycerium, and she often said to us:—

“‘Listen, ye maidens all; if ever you should serve a princess whose heart is consumed by a secret passion, and who can not see him whom she loves, then you must be shrewd and discreet like the waiting-woman Herlindis, when King Rother was wooing the daughter of the Emperor Constantinus.’ And when we sat together in the women's apartment, then there was a whispering and chattering, until old Glycerium related the story of *King Rother*.

“In the olden times the Emperor Constantinus was living in his castle on the Bosphorus. He had a wondrously beautiful daughter; and people said of her that she was radiant like the evening-star, and outshone all other maidens, like the golden thread among silken ones. One day there came a ship out of which landed twelve noble counts and twelve knights; and they all rode into Constantinus's courtyard; and one of them, whose name was Lupolt, rode at their head. And all the people of the city marvelled at them, for their garments and mantles were heavy with gold and precious stones, and the horses' saddles rang with little golden bells. These were the messen-

gers of King Rother of Vikingland, and Lupolt sprang from his horse and said to the emperor :—

“ We are sent by our king, named Rother, who is the handsomest man ever born of woman, and he is served by the best of heroes, and at his court we have balls and tournaments and all that heart can desire. But he is unmarried, and his heart feels lonely. You should give him your daughter ! ’

“ But Constantinus was a hot-tempered man. He flung the imperial globe fiercely to the ground, and cried :—

“ No one has as yet wooed my daughter and not lost his life. How dare you bring me such an insult from across the sea ? You are all my prisoners.’

“ And he had them thrown into a dungeon, where neither sun nor moon could shine ; and they had nothing but bread and water to live on ; and they wept bitterly.

“ When the tidings reached King Rother, his heart grew very sorrowful, and he sat on a rock and spoke to no one. Then he formed the resolution of crossing the seas, like a hero, to succor his faithful messengers ; and as he had been warned against the Greeks, and had been told that if a man wanted to attain anything there he must needs gild the truth, he made his heroes take an oath that they would all pretend that his name was not Rother, but Dietrich, and that he had been banished by King Rother, and had come to crave the Greek emperor’s assistance.

“ So they sailed across the sea, and Rother took his harp on board with him ; for before his twelve

ambassadors had weighed anchor, he came to the shore with his harp and played three melodies, which they were to remember. 'If ever you should be in distress, and hear these melodies, you will know Rother is near and will help you.'

"It was an Easter-day, and the Emperor Constantinus had gone on horseback to the Hippodrome, when Rother made his entrance. And all the citizens of Constantinople came running out of their houses, for such a sight they had never seen before. Rother had brought his giants along with him. The first was called Asprian, and carried an iron bar which measured twenty-four yards in length; the second was called Widolt, and was so fierce that they had to load him down with chains; and the third was called Eveningred.

"And many valiant warriors followed him, and twelve carriages loaded with treasures came in the rear, and the whole was so splendid that the empress said: 'Alas! how stupid we were to refuse our daughter to King Rother! What a man he must be to send such heroes over the seas!'

"King Rother wore a suit of gold armor, and a purple coat, and two rows of beautiful rings on his wrists. And he bent his knee before the Greek emperor and said:—

"'I, the Prince Dietrich, have been outlawed by a king whose name is Rother, so that all I have ever done is to my hurt. I offer you my services.'

"Then Constantinus invited all the heroes to his court at the Hippodrome, and treated them with high honor, and made them sit down at his own table.

Now in the hall there was a tame lion, which used to take away the serving-men's food. It came also to Asprian's plate to lick it up; then Asprian seized it by the mane and threw it against the wall, so that its bones were all broken, and the chamberlains said to one another, 'He who has no desire to be thrown against the wall, had best leave that man's plate alone.'

"But King Rother distributed many handsome presents amongst the Greeks. Every one who visited him in his abode received either a mantle or some piece of arms. Among others there also came an outlawed count, and to him he gave a thousand silver crowns, and took him into his service, so that his train was increased by many hundred knights.

"Thus the so-called Dietrich's praise was in every one's mouth; and among the women there began a whispering and talking, so that there was not a chamber the walls of which did not ring with Herr Dietrich's name.

"Then the emperor's golden-haired daughter said to Herlindis, her waiting-woman: —

"'Alas, what shall I do, that I also may obtain a look at the man whom they all are praising?'

"And Herlindis replied: —

"'Well, beg your father to give a great banquet at court, and to invite the hero; then you can easily see him.'

"The emperor's daughter followed Herlindis's advice, and Constantinus consented, and invited his dukes and counts to the Hippodrome court, — the foreign heroes also. All who were invited came; and

there was a great crowd around him whom they called Dietrich; and just as the princess, with her hundred court-ladies, came in, wearing a golden crown and a gold-embroidered purple mantle, there was a terrible commotion: a chamberlain had ordered Asprian the giant to move on his bench to make room for other people. Then Asprian gave the chamberlain a box on the ear which split his head, and there ensued a general jostling, so that Dietrich himself had to restore order.

“For this reason the emperor’s daughter could not obtain sight of the hero; though she wanted it ever so much.

“Then she said again to Herlindis at home:—

“‘Woe is me! now I shall have sorrow by night and by day, and shall enjoy no more rest until my eyes have beheld that valiant man. He who would bring me the hero to my chamber might win a handsome reward.’

“And Herlindis laughed, and said:—

“‘That errand I will faithfully undertake. I will go to the house where he lives.’

“Then the sly maiden put on her most becoming garments and went to Herr Dietrich. He received her with due courtesy. And she sat down very close to him and whispered into his ear:—

“‘My mistress, the emperor’s daughter, sends thee many gracious greetings. She has taken a great fancy to thee; thou must up and pay her a visit.’

“But Dietrich replied:—

“‘Woman, thou art not doing right. I have en-

tered many a beautiful bower in days gone by ; why dost thou mock the homeless wanderer ? At the emperor's court there are a multitude of noble dukes and princes ; thy mistress never dreamt of what thou art now saying !

“ And when Herlindis insisted on the truth of her words, Herr Dietrich said : —

“ ‘ There are so many spies hereabouts ! he who wishes to keep his reputation unstained must be very careful. Constantinus might banish me. There would be trouble even if I should wish to see thy mistress ; tell her this, though I should much like to serve her. ’

“ Herlindis was starting to go, when the king ordered his goldsmiths to make a pair of golden shoes, and another pair of silver ; and he gave her one of each pair, and a mantle, and twelve gold bracelets ; for he was gallant, and knew that a princess's waiting-woman who was intrusted with errands of love ought to be much honored. ” . . .

Praxedis here stopped a moment ; for Herr Spazzo, who for some time had been drawing a number of big-nosed faces on the sand with the scabbard of his sword, now hummed audibly ; but as he did not say anything, she continued : —

“ And Herlindis hastened home joyfully, and spoke thus to her mistress : —

“ ‘ The valiant knight holds his honor dear. He values the emperor's good-will too much. But look here, what he gave me ! The shoes, the twelve

bracelets and the mantle! How glad I am that I went there; for surely I shall never behold a handsomer knight in this wide world. God pardon me, but I stared at him as if he were an angel!’

“‘Alas!’ said the princess, ‘am I never to be made happy? Then at least thou must give me the shoes which the noble hero gave to thee. I will give thee their weight in gold.’

“So the bargain was concluded. First she put on the golden shoe; but when she took up the silver one, she perceived that it was made for the same foot.

“‘Woe is me!’ cried the beautiful maiden. ‘A mistake has been made; I shall never get it on. Thou must go once more to Herr Dietrich, and beg him to give thee the other shoe, and also come himself.’

“‘That will delight scandal-mongers,’ laughed Herlindis; ‘but what does it matter? I will go!’—and she drew up her skirts almost to her knees, and walked, as if she had forgotten the proper gait of a woman, across the wet courtyard to Herr Dietrich; and the noble hero well knew why she came, but he feigned not to see her.

“Herlindis said to him:—

“‘I have to come again with more messages. A mistake has been made, and now my mistress bids me ask thee to give me the other shoe, and to come and see her thyself.’

“‘Hei! how I should like to do so,’ said he; ‘but the emperor’s chamberlains would betray me.’

“‘Oh, never,’ said Herlindis; ‘for they are all out

scuffling together and throwing the spear. Take two servants with thee, and follow me softly, and no one will miss thee during the tournament.'

"Whereupon the faithful maiden wanted to go; but the hero said:—

"'I will first inquire about the shoes.' Then Asprian, who was outside, called out:—

"'What matters an old shoe? We have made many thousands of them, and the servants are now wearing them. I will look for the right one.' So he brought it, and Dietrich again gave the waiting-woman a mantle and twelve bracelets.

"So she went on before, and imparted the desired news to her mistress.

"Herr Dietrich, meanwhile, caused a great uproar to be made in the courtyard of the Hippodrome, and caused the giants to go out. Widolt came out first, with his iron bar, and raved like a madman, and Asprian cut a summersault in the blue air, and Evening-red threw a monstrous stone of several hundred weight, and then sprang after it, twelve furlongs off; so that none of the spies thought of watching Herr Dietrich.

"He discreetly walked across the yard.

"At the window stood the princess, looking for him; and her heart beat fast, and her chamber-door was opened to him, and she said to him:—

"'Welcome, my noble lord! What pleasure it gives me to see you! Now you yourself can put the beautiful shoes on my feet.'

"'With pleasure!' said the hero, and he sat down at her feet, and his manners were graceful; and she

put her foot on his knee, and the foot was dainty, and the shoes fitted well. So Herr Dietrich put them on for her.

“‘Now, tell me, most noble lady,’ the artful man began; ‘thou hast probably been wooed by many a man: confess, now, which of them all has pleased thee most?’

“Then the emperor’s daughter replied with a serious mien:—

“‘Sir, on my soul and by my holy baptism! if all the heroes of the world were brought together, not one of them would be found worthy to be called thy equal. Thou art a virtuous and noble man,—and yet, if the choice were in my power, I would take a hero of whom I can not help thinking every new day. The messengers whom he has sent to woo me now lie in a deep dungeon. His name is Rother; he lives across the seas, and if I can not have him, a maid will I remain all the days of my life!’

“‘Eia!’ said Dietrich; ‘if thou wilt love Rother, I will bring him hither quickly. We have lived joyously together as friends; he has been kind and good to me, although he drove me away from his lands.’

“Then the princess replied: ‘Say, how canst thou love a man who has banished thee? I see it all! Thou art a messenger sent by King Rother! Now speak, and hide nothing from me; for whatever thou now tellest me, I will keep secret until the day of judgment.’

“Then the hero looked steadily at her and said: ‘Then I will put my trust in God’s grace and thine.

Well, then! thy feet are resting on King Rother's lap!

“Great was the terror of the gentle maiden. She hastily drew her foot away, and cried:—

“Oh, woe is me! how ill-bred I was! I was led by my presumption to place my foot on thy lap! If God sent thee hither, I should be deeply thankful. But how can I trust thee? If thou couldst prove to me the truth, I would this very day gladly quit my father's realms with thee. There is not a man living whom I would take but thee, if thou wert really King Rother,—but for the present this must remain undone.’

“How could I prove it better than through my friends in prison?’ said the king. ‘If they could see me, thou wouldst soon be convinced that I have spoken truth.’

“Then I will beg my father to let them out,’ said the princess. ‘But who will prevent their escape?’

“I will look to that,’ he replied.

“Then the emperor's daughter kissed the hero, and he left her chamber in all honor, and returned to his house, and his heart was full of deep joy.

“At the first dawn of the next day the princess took a staff, and slipped into a black mourning dress, and put the pilgrim's badge on her shoulders as if she were going to leave the land, and her face was pale and sad. And she went over to the Emperor Constantinus, knocked at his door, and artfully said:

“My dear father! As I am alive, I must go where ruin waits me. I feel very miserable, and who will comfort my soul? In a dream, the impris-

oned messengers of King Rother appeared to me, and they look pale and worn, and leave me no peace. So I must go to escape from them, unless you let me comfort the miserable men with food, wine, and a bath. Let them out if only for three days.'

"Then answered the emperor:—

"'This will I grant thee, if thou wilt find me security that they go down into their prison again on the third day.'

"Now, as they were going to supper in the emperor's hall, the supposed Herr Dietrich also came with his knights; and when the repast was over, and they were washing their hands, the princess walked round the tables as if she were going to choose a surety from among the rich dukes and lords; and she said to Dietrich:—

"'Now take notice that thou art to help me. Stand bail for the messengers with thy life.'

"And he replied: 'I will be surety, most beautiful maiden.'

"And he pledged his head to the emperor, and the emperor sent some men with him to open the prison.

"There lay the messengers, wretched and feeble. When the prison doors were opened, the clear daylight shone in and dazzled the unfortunate men, for they were unaccustomed to it. Then they took the twelve counts and let them go out of the prison. Each one was followed by a knight, and walking was hard for them. Lupolt their leader walked at their head. He wore a torn apron round his loins, and his beard was long and shaggy, and his

body was covered with filth. Herr Dietrich was very sad, and he turned away so that they might not recognize him; and he could scarcely repress the tears, for never before had sorrow come so nigh to him.

“He had them all brought to his house and taken care of; and the counts said: ‘Who was that who stood aside? He is surely befriending us.’ And they laughed with both joy and sorrow; but they did not recognize him.

“The next day the emperor’s daughter invited the sorely-trying men to court, and presented them with good glittering garments, and had them enjoy a warm bath, and had a table spread to feed them. As soon as the noblemen were seated around it, and were forgetting their woe for a moment, Dietrich took his harp, and hid himself behind the arras, and touched the strings; he played one of the melodies which he had before played on the seashore.

“Lupolt had raised the cup to his lips: he let it fall, so that the wine was all spilt over the table; and another, who was cutting bread, dropped his knife; and all listened, wondering. Louder and clearer swelled their king’s song: then Lupolt leaped over the table, and all the counts and knights after him, as if something of their old strength had suddenly returned; and they tore down the arras, and kissed the harper, and knelt before him, and there was no end to their joy.

“Then the princess knew that he was really and truly King Rother of Vikingland, and she uttered a loud cry of delight, so her father Constantinus came

running, and whether he liked it or not he could do nothing but join the lovers' hands; and the messengers never went back to their dungeon, and Rother was no longer called Dietrich, and he kissed his bride and took her home over the sea, and became a very happy man, holding his wife in great honor. And whenever they sat lovingly together, they would say:

“‘Thanks be to God, to knightly valor and prudent waiting-woman's cunning.’

“That is the story of King Rother!”²⁴¹

Praxedis had been speaking a long while.

“We are well satisfied,” said the duchess; “and whether smith Weland will carry off the prize, after King Rother's history, seems to us rather doubtful.”

Herr Spazzo was not annoyed at this.

“The waiting-women at Constantinople seem to have eaten wisdom with spoons,” said he. “But even though I may be conquered, the last tale has not yet been told.”

He glanced over at Ekkehard, who was sitting lost in thought. He had not heard much of King Rother. All the time that Praxedis was speaking, his eyes had been fixed on the duchess's frontlet with the rose in it.

“However,” continued Herr Spazzo, “I hardly believe the story. Years ago I was sitting in the bishop's courtyard at Constance, drinking a jug of wine, and a Greek came that way peddling relics. His name was Daniel, and he had many holy bones and church-ornaments and artistic things, and among them there was an ancient sword with jewel-set hilt,

which he tried to foist on me, saying that it was the sword of King Rother; and if the gold Thalers had not then been as scarce with me as the hairs on the peddler's pate, I should have bought it. The man told me that Herr Rother fought for the emperor's daughter, with that very same sword, with King Ymelot of Babylon; but he knew nothing about golden shoes, or waiting-women, or harp-playing."

"I dare say many things might be true in this world which you know nothing about," said Praxedis, lightly.

Evening had set in. The moon had risen, shedding a pallid light. Spicy perfumes filled the air; in the bushes and along the precipice there were flickering flashes from the fireflies getting ready for flight.

A servant came down bringing links; the tapers, being protected by linen saturated with oil, burned steadily. It was mild and pleasant in the garden.

The monastery-pupil sat contentedly on his stool, and held his hands folded as if in devotion.

"What does our young guest think?" asked the duchess.

"I would gladly give my best Latin book," said he, "if I could have been there to see the giant Asprian dashing the lion against the wall."

"Thou shouldst become a knight, and go out thyself to conquer giants and dragons," jestingly said the duchess.

This, however, did not convince him. "But we have to fight the Devil himself," said he; "that is worse."

Frau Hadwig was not yet inclined to go indoors. She broke a twig from the maple-tree into two unequal pieces and stepped up to Ekkehard. He started up in confusion.

“Now,” said the duchess, “draw. Either you or I!”

“Either you or I,” vacantly repeated Ekkehard. He drew out the shorter piece. It slipped out of his hand; he resumed his seat and said not a word.

“Ekkehard!” sharply exclaimed the duchess.

He looked up.

“You are to relate something!”

“I am to relate something,” murmured he, passing his right hand over his forehead. It was hot; inside it was a storm.

“Ah, yes — relate something. Who is going to play the lute for me?”

He stood up and gazed out into the moonlit night; the others looked at him in mute wonder; then he began in a strange, hollow voice: —

“’T is a short story. There once was a light which shone brightly; and it shone down from a mountain, and it shone in rainbow hues, and it wore a rose under the frontlet . . .”

“A rose under the frontlet?” muttered Herr Spazzo, shaking his head.

“ . . . And there was once a dusky moth,” continued Ekkehard, in the same tone, “which flew up to the mountain, and which knew that it must perish if it flew into the light; and yet it flew in, and the light burned the moth so that it became mere ashes, — and never flew any more. Amen!”

Frau Hadwig sprang to her feet indignantly.

"Is that the whole of your story?" she asked.

"'T is the whole of it," replied he, with unchanged voice.

"It is time for us to go in," proudly said the duchess. "The cool night-air causes fever."

She walked past Ekkehard with a disdainful look. Burkard carried her train. Ekkehard stood there immovably.

The chamberlain Spazzo patted him on the shoulder. "The dark moth was a poor devil, Master Chaplain!" said he, compassionately.

A gust of wind came and put out the lights.

"It was a monk," said Ekkehard, indifferently; "sleep well!"

CHAPTER XXI.

REJECTION AND FLIGHT.

EKKEHARD remained long sitting in the garden bower; then he rushed out into the darkness. He knew not whither his feet were carrying him.

In the morning he found himself on the top of the Hohenkrähen, which had stood silent and deserted since the Forest woman's departure. The remains of the burnt hut lay in a confused heap. Where the living-room had once been the Roman stone with the Mithras was still to be seen. Grass and ferns grew over it, and a blindworm was stealthily creeping up on the old weatherbeaten idol.

Ekkehard burst into a wild scornful laugh.

"The chapel of St. Hadwig!" he cried, striking his breast with his clenched hand. "Thus it must be!"

He upset the old Roman stone, and then mounted the rocky crest of the hill. There he threw himself down, and pressed his forehead against the cool ground, which had once been touched by Frau Hadwig's foot. There he remained for a long time. When the scorching rays of the mid-day sun fell upon him, he still lay there, and — slept.

Toward evening he came back to the Hohentwiel, hot and haggard, and with an unsteady gait. Blades of grass clung to the woollen texture of his cowl.

The people of the castle timidly stepped out of his way, as if before one on whose forehead ill-luck had set her seal. In other times they had been wont to come toward him to entreat his blessing.

The duchess had noticed his absence, but made no inquiries about him. He went up to his tower, and seized a parchment, as if he would read. It was Gunzo's attack upon him. *Willingly I would exhort you to aid him with healing medicine ; but I fear, I sadly fear that his disease is too deeply rooted,* was what he read.

He laughed. The arched ceiling threw back an echo ; he leaped to his feet as if he wanted to find out who had laughed at him. Then he went to the window, and looked down into the depths below. It was deep, deep down : a sudden giddiness came over him ; he started back.

The small phial which the old Thieto had given him stood near his books. It made him melancholy. He thought of the blind old man ! " The service of women is an evil thing for him who wishes to remain good," he had said when Ekkehard took leave.

He tore the seal off from the phial, and poured the Jordan water over his head, and drenched his eyes. It was too late. Whole floods of holy water will not extinguish the inward fire, unless one plunges in never to rise again . . . Yet a momentary feeling of quiet came over him.

" I will pray," said he. " It is a temptation."

He threw himself on his knees, but soon it seemed to him as if the pigeons were swarming round his head, as they did on the day when he first entered the tower room; but now they had mocking faces, and wore a contemptuous look about their beaks.

He got up and slowly descended the winding staircase to the castle-chapel. The altar below had been a witness of earnest devotions on many a happy day. The chapel was, as before, dark and silent. Six ponderous pillars, with square capitals adorned with leaf-work, supported the vault. A faint streak of daylight fell in through the narrow windows. The recesses of the niche where the altar stood were but faintly illuminated; the golden background of the mosaic picture of the Redeemer alone shone with a soft glitter. Greek artists had transplanted the forms of their church ornaments to the German rock. In a white flowing garment, with a gold-red aureole round his head, the Saviour's emaciated figure stood there, with the fingers of the right hand extended in the act of blessing.

Ekkehard bowed before the altar-steps; his forehead rested on the stone flags. Thus he remained, wrapt in prayer.

“O Thou who hast taken the sorrows of the world on Thyself, send out one ray of Thy grace on me unworthy.”

He raised his head and gazed up as if he expected the earnest figure to step down from the wall and hold out his hand to him.

“I am here at Thy feet, like Peter, surrounded by tempest, and the waves will not bear me up! Save

me, O Lord! save me as Thou didst him when Thou didst walk over the raging billows, extending Thy hand to him and saying, *O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?*"

But no sign was given him.

Ekkehard's brain was giving way.

There was a rustling through the chapel like that of a woman's garments. He heard nothing.

Frau Hadwig had come down, under the impulse of a strange mood. Since she had begun to bear a grudge against the monk the image of her late husband recurred oftener to her mind. Naturally, as the one receded into the background, the other must come forward again. The later reading of Vergil had also been responsible for this, as there had been said so much about the memory of Sichæus.

The following day was the anniversary of Herr Burkhard's death. With his lance and shield by his side, the old duke lay buried in the chapel. His tomb at the right of the altar was covered by a rough stone slab. The eternal lamp burned dimly over it. A sarcophagus of gray sandstone stood near it, resting on small clumsy pillars with Ionic capitals; and these again rested on grotesque stone animals. This stone coffin Frau Hadwig had had made for herself. Every year, on the anniversary of the duke's death, she had it carried up, filled with corn and fruits, which were distributed among the poor, — the means of living coming from the resting-place of the dead. It was a pious ancient custom.²⁴²

To-day it was her purpose to pray on her husband's grave. The duskiness of the place concealed Ekkehard's kneeling figure. She did not see him.

Suddenly she was startled from her devotions. A laugh, subdued yet piercing, struck her ear. She knew the voice. Ekkehard had risen and recited the following words of the psalms:—

*Hide me under the shadow of thy wings,
From the wicked that oppress me,
From my deadly enemies, who compass me about . . .
With their mouth they speak proudly. . . .*

He spoke it in an ominous tone. It was no more the voice of prayer.

Frau Hadwig bent down beside the sarcophagus; she would gladly have placed another on it to hide her from Ekkehard's view. She no longer cared to be alone with him. Her heart beat calmly now.

He went to the door.

Then suddenly he turned back. The everlasting lamp was softly swinging to and fro over Frau Hadwig's head. Ekkehard's eye pierced the twilight. . . . With one bound,—quicker than that which in later days St. Bernard made through the cathedral at Speier when the madonna had beckoned to him,—he stood before the duchess. He gave her a long and penetrating look.

She rose to her feet, and seizing the edge of the stone sarcophagus with her right hand, she confronted him; the everlasting lamp over her head still gently swung to and fro on its silken cord.

“Blessed are the dead; prayers are offered for them,” said Ekkehard, interrupting the silence.

Frau Hadwig made no reply.²⁴³

“Will you pray for me also when I am dead?”

continued he. "Oh, you must not pray for me! . . . have a drinking-cup made out of my skull, and when you take another doorkeeper away from the monastery of St. Gallus, you must offer him the welcoming draught in it, — and give him my greeting! — You may put your own lips to it also; it will not crack. But you must then wear the circlet with the rose in it." . . .

"Ekkehard!" said the duchess, "you are outrageous!"

He put his right hand to his forehead.

"Oh," said he, in a mournful voice, — "Oh, yes! . . . the Rhine is also outrageous. They stopped its course with giant rocks, but it gnawed through them, and now rushes and roars onward in foam and tumult and destruction! Bravo, thou free heart of youth! . . . And God is outrageous also; for he has allowed the Rhine to be, and the Hohentwiel, and the duchess of Suabia, and the tonsure on my head."

The duchess began to shiver. Such an outbreak of long repressed feeling she had not expected. But it was too late, — she remained indifferent.

"You are ill," she said.

"Ill?" asked he; "it is merely a requital. More than a year ago at Whitsuntide, when there was as yet no Hohentwiel for me, I carried the coffin of St. Gallus in solemn procession out of the cloister, and a woman threw herself on the ground before me. 'Get up,' cried I; but she remained prostrate in the dust. 'Walk over me with thy relic, priest, so that I may recover,' cried she; and my foot stepped over her.²⁴⁴ That woman was suffering from the heart-ache. Now 't is reversed." . . .

Tears interrupted his voice. He could not go on. Then he threw himself at Frau Hadwig's feet, and clasped the hem of her garment. The man was all of a tremble.

Frau Hadwig was touched, — touched against her will; as if from the hem of her garment a feeling of unutterable woe thrilled up to her heart.

“Stand up,” said she, “and think of other things. You still owe us a story. Overcome it!”

Then Ekkehard laughed through his tears.

“A story!” cried he; “oh, a story! But not told. . . . Come, let us act the story! From the height of yonder tower one can see so far into the distance, and so deep into the valley below, — so sweet and deep and tempting. What right has the ducal castle to hold us back? No one who wishes to get down into the depth below need count more than three, . . . and we flutter and glide softly into the arms of Death there. Then I should be no longer a monk, and I might wind my arms around you.”

He struck Herr Burkhard's tombstone with his clenched hand.

“And he who sleeps here shall not prevent me! If he — the old man — comes, I will not let you go. And we will float up to the tower again, and sit where we sat before; and we will read Vergil to the end; and you must wear the rose in your circlet, as if nothing whatever had happened. . . . We will keep the gate well locked against the duke, and we will laugh at all evil tongues, and folks will say, as they sit at their fireplaces of a winter's evening: ‘That

is a pretty tale of the faithful Ekkehard, who slew the Emperor Ermanrich for hanging the Harlungen brothers, and who afterwards sat for many hundred years before Frau Venus's mountain, with his white staff in his hands, and meant to sit there until the day of judgment to warn off all pilgrims coming to the mountain.²⁴⁵ But at last he grew tired of this, and ran away, and became a monk at St. Gall; and he fell down an abyss and was killed; and he is sitting now beside a proud, pale woman, reading Vergil to her. And at midnight may be heard the words ringing through the Hegau:—

“*Thou commandest, O queen, to renew the unspeakable sorrow.*”

“And then she will have to kiss him, whether she will or not; for death makes up for what life denies.”

He had spoken with a wild, wandering look; and now his voice failed with low weeping. Frau Hadwig had stood immovably all this time. It was as if a gleam of pity shone in her cold eyes; she bent down her head.

“Ekkehard,” said she, “you must not speak of death. This is madness. We live, you and I!”

He did not stir. Then she lightly laid her hand on his burning forehead. A wild thrill flashed through his brains. He sprang up.

“You are right!” cried he. “We live,—you and I!”

A dizzy darkness clouded his eyes; he stepped forward, and winding his arms round her proud form, he fiercely pressed her to his heart; his kiss burned on her lips. Her protest died away unheard.

He raised her high up toward the altar, as if she were an offering he was about to make.

“Why dost thou hold out thy gold glittering fingers so quietly, instead of blessing us?” he cried out to the dark and solemn picture.

The duchess had started like a wounded deer. One moment, and all the passion of her hurt pride revolted within her. She pushed the frenzied man back with strong hand, and tore herself out of his embrace.

He had one arm still round her waist, when the church-door was suddenly opened, and a flaring streak of daylight broke through the darkness — they were no longer alone.

Rudimann the cellarer, from Reichenau, stepped over the threshold; other figures became visible in the background of the courtyard.

The duchess had grown pale with shame and anger. A tress of her long dark hair had become loosened and was streaming down her back.

“I beg your pardon,” said the man from the Reichenau, with grinning politeness. “My eyes have beheld nothing.”

Then Frau Hadwig tore herself entirely free from Ekkehard’s hold and cried out: “Yes, I say! — yes, . . . yes, you have seen a madman, who has forgotten himself and God, . . . I should be sorry for your eyes if they had beheld nothing, for I would have had them torn out!”

It was with an undescribably cold dignity that she pronounced these words.

Then Rudimann began to understand the strange scene.

“I had forgotten,” said he, scornfully, “that he who stands there is one of those to whom wise men have applied the words of St. Hieronymus, when he says: ‘Their manners are more befitting dandies and bridegrooms than the elect of the Lord.’”

Ekkehard stood leaning against a pillar, with arms stretched out in the air, like Odysseus when he wanted to embrace his mother’s shade. Rudimann’s words roused him from his dreams.

“Who comes between her and me?” he cried threateningly.

But Rudimann, patting him on the shoulder with an insolent familiarity, said: —

“Calm yourself, my good friend; we have only come to deliver a note into your hands. St. Gallus can no longer allow the wisest of all his disciples to remain out in the capricious, malicious world. You are summoned home! — And don’t forget the stick with which you are wont to ill-treat your confraters who like to snatch a kiss at vintage-time, you chaste moralist,” he added in a low whisper.

Ekkehard stepped back. Wild longings, the pang of separation, burning passionate love, and the added insults, — all these stormed up in him. He hastily advanced toward Frau Hadwig; but the chapel was already filling. The abbot of Reichenau himself had come to have the pleasure of witnessing Ekkehard’s departure.

“It will be a difficult task to get him away,” he had said to the cellarer. It was easy enough now. Monks and lay-brothers came in after him.

“Sacrilege!” Rudimann called out to them. “He

has laid his wanton hand on his mistress even before the altar !”

Then Ekkehard boiled over. To have the most sacred secret of his heart profaned by insolent coarseness, — a pearl thrown before swine, . . . he tore down the everlasting lamp, and swung the heavy vessel like a sling. The light went out, . . . a hollow groan was heard, the cellarer lay with bleeding head on the stone flags. The lamp fell clattering beside him. . . . A blow, fierce struggle, wild confusion . . . all was at an end with Ekkehard.

They had overpowered him; tearing off the girdle of his cowl, they bound him.

There he stood, the handsome youthful figure, now the very picture of woe, like the broken-winged eagle. He gave one mournful, troubled, appealing look at the duchess . . . She turned away.

“Do what you think right,” said she to the abbot, and swept through the throng.

A cloud of smoke came drifting toward her. Loud voices and noisy merriment rang from the castle-gate; a great bonfire, made up of resinous pine-branches, was burning outside. The servants of the castle were dancing around it, throwing flowers into the flames; just then Audifax had put his arm round the companion of his adventures, and with a loud cry of delight, jumped with her through the towering flames.

“What does all this smoke mean?” asked Frau Hadwig of Praxedis, who came hurrying up.

“Midsummer-day !”²⁴⁶ replied the Greek girl.

It was a dreary, depressing evening. The duchess had locked herself up in her bow-windowed room, and refused admittance to every one.

Ekkehard had been hurried away into a dungeon by the abbot's men. In the same tower in the airy upper story of which his chamber was situated there was a damp, dark vault; fragments of old tombstones, deposited there long before when the castle-chapel had been renovated, were scattered about in unsightly heaps. A bundle of straw had been thrown in for him, and a monk was sitting outside to guard the entrance.

Burkard, the monastery-pupil, ran up and down, wailing and wringing his hands. He could not understand the fate which had befallen his uncle. The servants were all putting their heads together, eagerly whispering and gossiping, as if the hundred-tongued Rumor had been sitting on the roof of the castle, spreading her falsehoods about.

"He tried to murder the duchess," said one.

"He has been practising the Devil's own arts with that big book of his," said another. "To-day is St. John's day, when the Devil has no power, and so he could not help him."

At the well in the courtyard stood Rudimann the cellarer, letting the clear water flow over his head. Ekkehard had given him a sharp cut; the blood obstinately and angrily trickled down into the water.

Praxedis came down looking pale and sad. She was the only soul who felt sincere pity for the prisoner. On seeing the cellarer, she ran into the garden, tore up a blue cornflower with the roots, and brought it to him.

“Take that,” said she, “and hold it in your right hand until it gets warm; that will stop the bleeding. Or shall I fetch you some linen to bind up the wound?”

He shook his head.

“It will stop of itself when the time comes,” said he. “’Tis not the first time that I have been bled. Keep your cornflowers for yourself.”

But Praxedis was anxious to conciliate Ekkehard’s enemy. She brought some linen; he allowed his wound to be dressed. Not a word of thanks did he proffer.

“Are you not going to let Ekkehard out to-day?” she asked.

“To-day?” Rudimann repeated sneeringly. “Do you feel inclined to weave a garland for the standard-bearer of Antichrist, the leading horse of Satan’s car, whom you have petted and spoiled up here as if he were the darling son Benjamin? To-day! In a month ask again over there.”

He pointed toward the Helvetian mountains.

Praxedis was frightened. “What are you going to do with him?”

“What is right,” replied Rudimann, with a dark look. “Wantonness, deeds of violence, disobedience, haughtiness, sacrilege, blasphemy, — there are scarcely names enough for all his nefarious acts; but, thank God, there are yet means for their expiation!” He made a gesture with his hand like that of flogging. “Ah, yes, plenty of means of expiation, gentle mistress! We will write the catalogue of his sins on his skin.”

"Have pity," said Praxedis; "he is a sick man."

"For that very reason we are going to cure him. When he has been tied to the pillar, and half-a-dozen rods have been flogged to pieces on his bent back, then all his spleen and his devilries will vanish!"

"For God's sake!" exclaimed the Greek girl.

"Calm yourself; there are better things yet. A stray lamb must be delivered up to the fold it belongs to. There he will find good shepherds who will look after the rest. Sheep-shearing, little girl, sheep-shearing! There they will cut off his hair, which will make his head cooler; and if you feel inclined to make a pilgrimage to St. Gall a year hence, you will see on Sundays and holidays some one standing barefooted before the church door, and his head will be as bare as a stubble-field, and the penitential garb will become him very nicely. What do you think? The heathenish practices with Vergil are at an end now."

"He is innocent!" said Praxedis.

"Oh," said the cellarer, sneeringly, "we shall never harm a single hair of innocence! He need only prove himself so by God's ordeal. If he takes the gold ring out of the kettle of boiling water with unburnt arm, our abbot himself will give him the blessing; and I will say that it was all a delusion of the Devil's own making, when my eyes beheld his Holiness, Brother Ekkehard, clasping your mistress in his arms."

Praxedis wept.

"Dear, venerable Rudimann!" . . . said she, imploringly.

He leered at the Greek girl, and his eyes fastened

insolently on her bosom. "So it will be," said he, with pursed-up lips. "However, I might possibly be induced to use my influence with the abbot if . . ."

"If what?" asked Praxedis, eagerly.

"If you would agree to leave your chamber door open to-night, so that I may bring you the report of my success."

He playfully drew together the ample folds of his habit so as to bring out the outlines of his tightly laced ²⁴⁷ waist, and assumed a complacent expectant attitude.

Praxedis stepped back and stamped her foot on the blue cornflower which lay on the ground.

"Cellarmaster, you are a wicked man!" she cried, and turned her back on him.

Rudimann knew how to read faces; from the twitching of Praxedis's eyelids, and the three angry lines on her forehead, it was clear to him that her chamber door would be locked against all the cellarers in Christendom thenceforth and forevermore.

She went away.

"Have you any further commands?" she asked, once more looking back.

"Yes, thou Greek insect! A jug of vinegar, if you please. I want to lay my rods in it; the writing is clearer then, and does not fade away so soon. Never before have I flogged an interpreter of Vergil. He deserves particular attention."

Burkard, the monastery-pupil, was sitting under the linden-tree, still sobbing. Praxedis, as she passed, gave him a kiss. It was done to spite the cellarer.

She went up to the duchess, intending to prostrate

herself and intercede for Ekkehard; but the door remained locked against her. Frau Hadwig was deeply irritated. If the monks of the Reichenau had not come in upon them, she might have pardoned Ekkehard's audacity, for she herself had indeed sowed the seeds of all that had grown to such portentous results; but now it had become a public scandal, it demanded punishment. The fear of evil tongues influences many an action.

The abbot had caused to be put into her hands the summons from St. Gall. St. Benedict's rules, said the letter, exacted not only the outward forms of a monastic life, but also the actual conformity of body and soul to its discipline. Ekkehard was to return. Passages from Gunzo's diatribe were quoted against him.

It was all the same to her. What his fate would be in the hands of his antagonists, she knew quite well. Yet she was determined to do nothing for him.

Praxedis knocked at her door a second time, but it was not opened.

"O thou poor moth," said she, sadly.

Ekkehard lay in his dungeon like one who had dreamt some wild dream. Four bare walls surrounded him; above there was a faint gleam of light. Often he trembled as if shivering with cold. After a while a melancholy smile of resignation began to hover round his lips, but it did not settle there; now and again he would clench his fists in a fit of fierce anger.

It is the same with the human mind as with the sea: though the tempest may have blown over for

a long time, the billowing surge is even stronger and more impetuous than before, and some mighty chaotic breaker dashes wildly up and drives the sea-gulls away from the rocks.

But Ekkehard's heart was not yet broken. It was still too young for that. He began to reflect on his position. The view into the future was not very cheering. He knew the rules of his order, and monastic customs, and he knew that the men from Reichenau were his enemies.

With big strides he paced up and down the narrow room.

"Great God, whom we may invoke in the hour of affliction, how will this all end?"

He shut his eyes and threw himself on the bundle of straw. Confused visions passed before his soul, and he saw with his inward eye of the spirit how they would drag him out in the early morning. The abbot would be sitting on his high stone chair, holding the crosier as a sign that it was a court of judgment, and then they would read out a long bill of complaints against him. . . . All this in the same courtyard in which he had once sprung out of the litter with such a jubilant heart, and in which he had preached his sermon against the Huns on that solemn Good-Friday, — and the men of the court would be gnashing their teeth against him!

"What shall I do?" thought he. "With my hand on my heart and my eyes raised toward heaven, I shall say: 'Ekkehard is not guilty!' But the judges will say, 'Prove it!'"

The big copper kettle will be brought; the fire

lighted beneath, the water will hiss and bubble up. The abbot draws off the golden ring from his finger. They push up the right sleeve of his habit; solemn penitential psalms resound.

“ I conjure thee, spirit of the water, that the Devil quit thee, and that thou serve the Lord, to make known the truth, like to the fiery furnace of the king of Babylon, when he had the three men thrown into it! ” — Thus the abbot addresses the boiling water; and “ Dip in thy arm, and fetch forth the ring,” says he to the accused. . . .

“ Righteous God, what judgment will thy ordeal give? ”

Wild doubts beset Ekkehard's soul. He believed in himself and his good cause, but his faith was less strong in the dreadful means by which priest-craft and church-laws sought to arrive at God's decision.

In the library of his monastery there was a little book bearing the title, *Against the inveterate error of the belief that through fire, water, or single combat, the truth of God's judgment can be revealed.*

This book he had once read, and he remembered it well. It was to prove that with these ordeals, which were an inheritance from the ancient heathen time, it was as the excellent Gottfried of Strassburg has expressed it in later days, —

*Der heilig Christ
Windschaffen wie ein Ärmel ist.**

“ And if no miracle is performed? ”

His thoughts were inclined to despondency and despair.

* *The Holy Christ himself is as changeable as a sleeve.*

“With burnt arm and proclaimed guilty, condemned to be flogged, . . . while she, perhaps, would stand on the balcony looking on, as if it were done to an entire stranger! . . . Lord of heaven and earth, send down Thy lightning!”

Yet hope does not entirely forsake even the most miserable.

Then again he imagined how, through all this shame and misery, a piercing “Stop!” would be heard: she comes rushing down with dishevelled locks, and in her rustling ducal mantle, and drives his tormentors away, as the Saviour drove out the usurers from the temple. And she presents him her hand and lips for the kiss of reconciliation.

Long and ardently his fantasy dwelt on that beautiful possibility; a breath of consolation came to him; he spoke in the words of the Preacher: “‘As gold is purified from dross in the fire, so the heart of man is purified by sorrow.’²⁴⁸ We will wait and see what will happen.”

He heard a slight noise in the antechamber of his dungeon. A stone jug was put down.

“You are to drink like a man,” said a voice to the lay-brother on guard, “for on St. John’s night all sorts of unearthly visitors people the air and pass over our castle. So you must take care to keep your courage up. There’s another jug for you, too.”

It was Praxedis who had brought the wine.

Ekkehard did not understand what she wanted. “Then she also is false,” thought he. “God protect me!”

He closed his eyes and fell asleep. After a good

while he was awakened. The wine had evidently been to the lay-brother's taste; he was singing a song in praise of the four goldsmiths ²⁴⁹ who once on a time had refused to make heathenish idols at Rome, and suffered martyrdom. With his heavy sandal-clad foot he was beating time on the stone flags. Ekkehard heard another jug of wine brought to the man. The singing became loud and uproarious. Then he held a soliloquy, in which he had much to say about Italy and good fare, and *Santa Agnese fuori le mura*. Then he ceased talking. The prisoner could distinctly hear his snoring through the stone walls.

The castle was silent. It was about midnight. Ekkehard lay in a doze, when it seemed to him as if the bolts were softly drawn. He remained lying on his straw. A figure came in; a soft hand was laid on the slumberer's forehead. He jumped up.

"Hush!" whispered his visitor.

When all had gone to rest, Praxedis had kept awake. "The wicked cellarer shall not have the satisfaction of punishing our poor melancholy teacher," was her thought; and woman's cunning always finds ways and means to accomplish her schemes. Wrapping herself up in a gray cloak, she had stolen down. No special artifices were necessary; the lay-brother was sleeping the sleep of the just. If he had been awake, the Greek girl would have frightened him by some ghost-trickery. That was her plan.

"You must escape!" said she to Ekkehard. "They mean to do their worst to you."

"I know it," he replied sadly.

"Come, then."

He shook his head. "I prefer to endure it," said he.

"Don't be a fool," whispered Praxedis. "First you built your castle on the glittering rainbow; and now that it has all tumbled down, you will allow them to ill-treat you into the bargain? As if they had a right to flog you and drag you away! And you will let them have the pleasure of witnessing your humiliation? . . . it would be a nice spectacle they would make of you! 'One does not see an honest man put to death every day,' said a man to me once in Constantinople, when I asked him why he was in such a hurry."

"Where should I go to?" asked Ekkehard.

"Neither to the Reichenau nor to your monastery," said Praxedis. "There is many a hiding-place left in the world."

She was getting impatient; and seizing Ekkehard by the hand, she dragged him on. "Come!" whispered she. He allowed himself to be led by her.

They glided past the sleeping watchman; now they stood in the courtyard; the fountain was splashing merrily. Ekkehard bent over the spout, and took a long draught of the cool water.²⁵⁰

"All is over," said he. "And now away!"

It was a stormy night. "You can not go out by the doorway, — the bridge is drawn up," said Praxedis; "but you can get down between the rocks on the eastern side. Our shepherd boy has tried that path before."

They entered the little garden. A gust of wind went roaring through the branches of the maple-tree. Ekkehard scarcely knew what was happening to him.

He mounted the battlement. Steep and rugged fell the klinkstone precipices; a dark abyss yawned before him; black clouds were chasing each other across the dusky sky, — weird, uncouth shapes, as if two bears were pursuing a winged dragon. Soon the fantastic forms melted together: the wind whipped them onward toward the Bodensee, that glittered faintly in the distance. Indistinctly outlined lay the landscape.

“Blessings on your way!” said Praxedis.

Ekkehard sat motionless on the battlement; he still held the Greek girl’s hand clasped in his. A mingled feeling of gratitude and melancholy surged through his storm-tossed brain. Then her cheek pressed against his, and a kiss trembled on his lips; he felt a pearly tear. Gently Praxedis drew away her hand.

“Don’t forget,” said she, “that you still owe us a story. May God lead your steps back again to this place, some day, so that we may hear it from your own lips.”

Ekkehard now let himself down. He waved his hand once more, then disappeared from her sight. The stillness of night was interrupted by a rattling and clattering down the cliff. The Greek girl peered down into the depths. A piece of rock had become loosened, and fell noisily down into the valley. Another followed somewhat slower, and on this Ekkehard was sitting, guiding it as a rider does his

horse. So he went down the steep precipice into the blackness of the night. . . .

Farewell!

She crossed herself and went back, smiling in spite of all her sadness. The lay-brother was still fast asleep. As she crossed the courtyard, Praxedis spied a basket filled with ashes, which she seized, and, softly stealing back into Ekkehard's dungeon, she poured out its contents in the middle of the room, as if this were all that was left of the prisoner's earthly remains.

"Why dost thou snore so heavily, most reverend brother?" she asked, and hurried away.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE WILDKIRCHLEIN.

AND now, kind reader, gird thy loins, take thy staff in hand, and follow us up into the mountains. From the lowlands of the Bodensee our tale takes us over to the Helvetian Alps. There the lofty Säntis stretches cheerfully up into the blue sky, — unless, indeed, he prefers to don his cloud-cap, — and looks smilingly down into the depths below, where the towns of men shrink to the size of ant-hills ; and all around him there is a company of splendid fellows, out of the same good old stamp, who put their bald heads together and blow clouds of fog into one another's faces. Down in their ravines goes a mighty roaring and rustling, and what they whisper to one another respecting the ways and doings of mankind, sounded rather contemptuous even a thousand years ago — and since then it has not become much better.

About ten days after the monks of the Reichenau had found nothing in the castle dungeon but a heap of ashes instead of their prisoner, and had debated a good deal whether the Devil had overcome him at the evil midnight hour and burnt him up, or whether he had escaped, — a man was walking along the white foaming Sitterbach, over luxuriant meadow-lands and rough ledges, toward the mountain-top.

Over a monkish garb he wore a wolf-skin mantle; a leathern pouch hung at his side, and he carried a spear in his right hand. Often he thrust the iron point into the ground, and leaned on the but-end, using the weapon as a mountain-stick.

Round about there was perfect silence and solitude. Long streamers of mist stretched over the wild valley where the Sitter emerges from the Seealpsee; but high on the other side towered stern rock walls, fringed by scanty green.

The mountain slopes — where at the present time a numerous race of jovial herdsmen nest in shingled shanties — were then for the most part deserts, but scantily peopled. Only far away in the lower part of the valley stood the cell of the abbot of St. Gall, surrounded by a few small humble cottages.

After the bloody battle of Zülpich a handful of liberty-loving Alemannic men, who could not learn to bend their necks to the Franconian yoke, had pushed their way into that wilderness.²⁵¹ Their descendants still lived there in scattered settlements, and in summer drove their herds up into the Alps. They were a race of strong, clever mountaineers, who, untouched by the bustle of the world, enjoyed a simple, free life, which they bequeathed to the following generations.

Steeper and rougher became the path followed by our traveller. He now stood beneath a steep overhanging wall of rocks. A heavy drop of water had fallen on his head from the limestone cliff above, and so he gazed up scrutinizingly to see whether the frightful crags would delay falling down until he had

passed by. But rock walls can remain longer in a leaning position than any structure made by human hands; so nothing fell but a second drop.

Clinging with his left hand to the rock, the man pushed forward. Ever narrower became the path. The dark abyss at his side came nearer and nearer; giddy depths yawned up, . . . and now vanished all trace of a pathway. Two enormous pine-trunks were laid over the abyss for a bridge.

"It must be done," said the man, and unhesitatingly he strode across. He drew a deep breath when his feet touched ground again on the other side, and turned round to inspect the appalling spot.

It was a narrow projection; above and below it there was a perpendicular wall of yellowish gray rock. In the depth below, scarcely visible, was the mountain-brook Sitter, a silver band in the green of the valley, and the glaucous mirror of the Seealpsee lay coily hidden among the dark fir-trees. Opposite, in their armor of ice and snow, rose the host of mountain giants. The pen almost breaks out in a veritable *jodel* of delight as it has to write down their names: the long-stretched mysterious Kamor; the tremendous walls of the Boghartenfirst and the Sigelsalp and the Maarwiese, on whose battlements thrives an aromatic grass-growth like the moss on the roofs of old houses. Then the guardian of the secret of the lake, the "old man," with his deeply furrowed stone-brow, and snow-hoary head, — the chancellor and bosom-friend of the lofty Säntis.

"Ye mountains of the Lord, praise ye the Lord!" exclaimed the wanderer, overwhelmed by the burden

of his sensations. Many hundreds of mountain-swallows fluttered out of the crevices of the rocks. Their appearance was like a good omen.

He advanced some steps. There the precipice had many a fissure, and he saw a twofold cavern. A simple cross made of rough tree-boles stood beside it. Trunks of fir-trees built into a log-cabin against one side of the cavern, and roofed with interlacing branches after the manner of a rude fortification or siege-tower, pointed to human occupancy. Not a sound broke the stillness.

The stranger knelt before the cross and prayed there a long while.

It was Ekkehard,—the place where he knelt was the “Wildkirchlein.”

He had reached the valley in safety on his stone horse, after Praxedis had freed him. The next morning found him exhausted at Radolfszell at old Moengal’s door.

“*Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people and go from them; for they are liars, an assembly of treacherous men!*” said he in the words of the prophet,²⁵² after he had told the parish-priest all his misfortune.

Then the old man pointed over toward the Säntis.

“Thou art right,” said Moengal. “The holy Gallus did the same. ‘In the wilderness will I abide, and there wait for Him who shall restore my soul’s health.’²⁵³ Perhaps he would never have become a saint, if he had thought and acted differently. Con-

quer thy grief. When the eagle feels sick, and his eyes grow dim, and his feathers come out, then he rises heavenward, as far as his wings will carry him.²⁵⁴ The nearness of the sun gives new youth. Do the same thing. I know a good little spot for thee to recover thy health in."

He described the road to Ekkehard.

"Thou wilt find a man up there," continued he, "who has not seen much of the world for the last twenty years. His name is Gottshalk. Give him my greeting, and let us hope that God has forgiven him his sins."

But the parish-priest did not say for what sins his old friend was doing penance up there.

Once, when times were hard, his monastery had sent him to Italy to buy corn. When he came to Verona, he was well received by the quarrelsome bishop Ratherius, and he held his devotions in the venerable cathedral. There the remains of St. Anastasia lay unlocked in a golden shrine, and the church was deserted, and the Devil tempted Gottshalk to take a keepsake back to Germany with him. So he took as much of the saint's body as he could carry away under his habit,²⁵⁵ — an arm, a foot, and some spine-bones, — and secretly departed with his spoil.²⁵⁶ But from that hour his inward peace was lost. In his waking moments and in his dreams the saint stood before him torn and mutilated, walking with crutches, and demanding back her arm and her foot. Over mountains and Alpine passes she followed him, and threateningly approached him even on the threshold of his own cloister. Then, half maddened, he

threw away the stolen relics, and fled to the heights of the Sântis, to spend the rest of his days in expiation of his heavy sin ; and there he erected the hermit's cell.

For two days old Moengal kept his young friend secreted ; then he rowed him across the lake during the night-time.

“ Don't go back to thy convent,” said he, as they were about to part company, “ lest their tittle-tattle should be the ruin of thee. Derision is worse than punishment. Thou deservest some punishment ; but let the fresh air inflict it. It has a right to do so ; thy fellow-monks have not.”

A spear and a wolf-skin were his parting gifts to Ekkehard. And stealthily he continued his journey. Bitterness filled his heart when in the night he passed his monastery, which still lay half in ruins. Several windows were lighted up ; but he hastened his steps. The abbot's cell in the mountains he also passed by without entering. He did not wish to be recognized by any one belonging to the monastery.

His prayers were ended now. He gazed expectantly at the entrance of the cavern, waiting for Gottshalk the hermit to come out and welcome the visitor. But no one stirred ; the cavern was empty.

SANCTA ANASTASIA IGNOSCE RAPTORI!

Holy Anastasia, pardon thy ravisher ! was written with juice from Alpine herbs on the bright-colored rock. A stone trough caught up the water which came trickling through the crevices. It was so full that it ran over.

Ekkehard entered the cell. A few earthen dishes stood beside a stone-flag, which probably had served as a hearth. In one corner lay a coarse fishing-net, as well as a hammer and spade, a rusty hatchet, and a quantity of split kindlings.

On some wooden boards was a rude bed of straw, which looked rotten and wormy. Two rats, frightened by Ekkehard's entrance, ran into a crack in the floor.

"Gottshalk," shouted Ekkehard, through his hollow hand. Then he uttered a call such as is customary among the mountaineers; but no one answered.

Closer investigation showed that the hermit had been gone for some time. In a jug there had been milk, but it was dried to a crust.

Mournfully Ekkehard stepped out again on the narrow strip of ground which gave standing-room between the cavern and the precipice.

Gazing over to the left, he could see a small bit of the blue Bodensee coming out behind the mountains.

But not all the magnificence of the Alpine world could banish a feeling of unutterable woe from his heart. Alone and God-forsaken, he stood there on the solitary height. He strained his ears in the hope of hearing a human voice, but the low and monotonous sighing of the wind in the pine-wood below was all that he heard.

His eyes became moist.

It was getting late. What now? . . . The cravings of hunger distracted his thoughts. He still had provisions for three days with him. So he sat down before the cavern, and in tears ate his evening meal.

His mountain threw long purple shadows on the

opposite precipice. Only the craggy peaks still glowed in the sunshine.

"As long as the cross stands on yonder rock, I shall not be entirely forsaken," said he.

Then he collected some grass from the edge of the cliff and prepared himself a new couch in the place of the mouldy old one. The cool evening air began to be felt. So he wrapped himself up in Moengal's mantle and lay down. Sleep is a good cure for the sufferings of youth. It came also to Ekkehard in spite of heartache and loneliness.

The first dawn of morning rose over the head of the Kamor, and only the morning-star was still shining in its lovely hue ²⁵⁷ when Ekkehard started up from his slumbers. It seemed to him he heard the joyous shout of a herdsman. Then he saw a light shining out from the darkest recess of the cavern. He believed that he was dreaming, that he was still in his dungeon, and that Praxedis was coming to free him. But the light came nearer; it was a pitch-pine torch. A maiden in a short petticoat was carrying this primitive candle. He jumped up. Unstartled she stood before him, and said: "God's welcome to you!"

It was a bold, half-wild creature, with olive complexion and fiery sparkling eyes. In her dark abundant tresses gleamed a massive silver pin in the shape of a spoon. The braided basket on her back, and the Alpenstock in her hand, marked her as being an inhabitant of the mountains.

"Holy Gallus protect me from new temptation," thought Ekkehard; but she called out cheerfully,

“Again I say, God’s welcome to you! Father will be right glad to hear that we have got a new mountain-brother. One can see by the little milk which the cows give that the old Gottshalk is dead, — he has said that many a time.”

It did not sound like the voice of a female demon. Ekkehard was still sleepy, and yawned.

“May God reward you!” cried the girl.

“Why did you say, ‘May God reward you’?” asked he.

“Because you did not swallow me,” laughed she; and before he could ask whence and whither, she darted off with her torch-light, and disappeared in the back of the cavern.

Presently she returned; a gray-bearded herdsman wrapped in a lamb-skin mantle followed her.

“Father will not believe it!” cried she to Ekkehard.

The herdsman took a deliberate survey of the stranger. He was a hardy man, who in the palmy days of his youth, at the immemorial contest of stone-putting, could throw a hundred-pound boulder twenty paces and more without giving way an inch. His tanned face and his bare sinewy arms were signs of still unimpaired strength.

“You want to be our new mountain-brother?” said he, good-naturedly, and held out his hand. “Well, that’s right!”

Ekkehard was embarrassed at the strangeness of the apparition.

“I intended to pay a visit to Brother Gottshalk,” said he.

“Thunder and lightning! you are too late,” said the herdsman. He lost his life last autumn.²⁵⁸ ’T was a grievous affair. Look there!” — pointing to a crag in the depth below. “On yonder slope he went to gather dry leaves; I was there myself to help him. Suddenly he started up as if he had been bitten by a snake, and pointed over at the Hohenkasten: ‘Holy Anastasia,’ he cried, ‘thou art made whole again, and standest on both feet, and beckonest to me with both thy arms!’ . . . and down he jumped as if there had been no abyss between the rock he stood on and the Hohenkasten. With a ‘*kyrie eleison!*’ he went down into the frightful depth. — God be merciful to his soul! Only this spring we found his body, wedged in between the rocks; and the vultures had carried off one arm and one leg, no one knows where.”

“Don’t scare him!” said the maiden, giving her father a nudge.

“Notwithstanding that, you can remain here all the same,” continued he. “You shall get what we gave to Gottshalk, — milk and cheese, and three goats, which may graze wherever they like. And if you need, you can ask for more; for we are no misers and skinflints up here. In return you will preach us a sermon each Sunday, and pronounce a blessing over meadows and pasture-grounds, so that storms and avalanches will cause no harm, and ring the bell for the hours.”

Ekkehard looked dubiously into the spacious cavern. It was a wonderfully comforting feeling for him to know that there were human beings close at hand; but he could not make out whence they came.

“Are your pasture-lands in the depths of the mountains?” asked he with a smile.

“He does not know where the Ebenalp is!” exclaimed the young girl, compassionately. “I will show you.”

Her pine-wood chip was still burning.

She turned to the back of the cavern; the men followed her. Then they went through a dark and narrow passage into the interior of the mountain; fragments of stone lay across the path. Often they had to bend down and creep in order to proceed. Sharp ruddy gleams played on the projecting edges of the walls; then the pallid daylight shone in. The path grew steep; finally the exit was before them. The young girl put out her torch by striking it against the strangely formed stalactites which hung down from the roof.

A few steps more, and they stood on a broad, magnificent mountain slope.

Spicy fragrance from Alpine flowers breathed around them. There bloomed veronicas and orchises and blue gentians; and the Apollo, the magnificent butterfly of the Alps, with a shining red eye on its wing, hovered over the petals.

After the darkness and narrowness of the cavern, a wide infinite landscape was refreshing to look upon.

The early morning mists were still lying in solid, motionless masses over the valleys, as if some mighty sea had been flooding the world, and at the very moment when its foam-crested billows were rising had been changed into stone. But clear and sharply outlined, the mountain-peaks stood out against the

blue sky, — like giant isles emerging from the mist ocean. The Bodensee, too, was covered up with fog, and the ranges of the far-off Rhetian mountains, with their craggy pinnacles one above another, were just visible through soft haze. Peacefully came the tinkling of the bells from the cattle grazing on the slope. It touched a chord in Ekkehard's soul, like a proud yet humble morning prayer.

"You are going to stay with us," said the old herdsman. "I can see it in your eyes."

"I am a homeless wanderer," said Ekkehard, sadly; "the abbot has not sent me hither."

"That's all the same to us," replied the old man. "If we and the old Sântis over there are satisfied, then no one else has anything to say about it. The abbot's sovereignty does not extend up to our mountain tops. We pay him our tithes, when his stewards come here to look at our pasturages,²⁵⁹ on the day when the milk is examined, because it is an old custom; but otherwise, —

*His fields I will not till,
Nor will I do his will,*²⁶⁰

as the old rhyme goes.

"Look there!" — he pointed to a gray mountain peak which rose in solitary grandeur from far-stretching ice-fields, — "that is the high Sântis, who is the lord of the mountains. We take off our hats to him, but to no one else. There, to the right, is the 'blue snow,' where, once upon a time, there were meadows and pasture-grounds; but a proud and overbearing man lived there, who was a giant, and his flocks and his pride increased so that he said: 'I

will be king over all that my eyes survey.' But in the depths of the Säntis there arose a thunder and shaking; and the ground opened and vomited out floods of ice, which covered up the giant, together with his cottage and his herds and his meadows; and from the eternal snow freezing winds blow down,—a reminder that besides the lord of the mountains no one is meant to reign here!"

The herdsman inspired Ekkehard with confidence. Independent strength and a kindly heart could be perceived in his words. His daughter, meanwhile, had gathered a nosegay of Alpine roses, which she held out to Ekkehard.

"What is thy name?" asked he.

"Benedicta."

"That is a good name," said Ekkehard, and he fastened the Alpine roses to his girdle. "I will remain with you."

Whereupon the old man shook his right hand so as to make him wince, then seized the Alpine horn which hung suspended on a strap over his shoulder, and blew a peculiar signal.

From heights and depths on all sides answering notes rang out; the neighboring herdsmen came over,—strong, wild-looking men,—and assembled round the old man, whom in the spring-time, on account of his good qualities, they had elected as *Alpmeister*, and inspector of the meadows on the *Ebenalp*.

"We have secured a new mountain-brother," said he. "I suppose that none of you will object and rave?" ²⁶¹

And they all lifted their hands in sign of approval, and went up to Ekkehard and bade him welcome; and his heart was touched, and he made the sign of the cross over them.

Thus Ekkehard became hermit of the Wildkirchlein, scarcely knowing how it had all come about. The master of the Ebenalp kept his word, and did his best to make him comfortable, and provided him with the three goats, and showed him the path between the cleft and cliff down to the Seealpsee, where the great trout were swimming about; and he shingled the gaps which dropping water and insolence of weather had made in the roof of Gottshalk's log-cabin.

By degrees Ekkehard accustomed himself to the narrow grounds in front of his new domicile, and when the next Sunday came he carried the wooden cross into the foreground of the cavern, adorned it with a wreath of flowers, and rang the bell which had hung at the entrance ever since Gottshalk's time, and which bore the mark of Tancho, the wicked bell-founder at St. Gall. When his herdsmen, with their boys and girls, were all assembled, he preached them a little sermon on the Transfiguration, and explained how every one who ascended the mountain-heights in the right spirit became transfigured also.

"And even though Moses and Elijah may not come down to us," he cried, "still we have the Sän-tis and the Kamor standing beside us; and they also are men of an old covenant, and it is good for us to be with them!"

His words were great and bold, and he himself

wondered at them as they came flowing from his lips; for they were almost heretical, and he had never read such a metaphor in any of the Church Fathers. But the herdsmen were satisfied, and the mountains also; and no one took exception to it.

At noon, *Benedicta*, the herdsman's daughter, came. A silver chain adorned her Sunday bodice, which encircled her bosom like a coat of mail. She brought a neat ashwood milking-pail, on which a cow was carved in simple outlines.

"My father sends this to you," said she, "because you preached so finely, and spoke well of our mountains; and if any one should try to harm you, you are to remember that the *Ebenalp* is near."

She poured a few handfuls of hazel-nuts out of her apron pocket into the pail.

"I have gathered these for you," she added; "and if you like them, I know where to find more."

Before *Ekkehard* could offer his thanks, she had disappeared in the depths of the cavern.

*Schwarzbraun sind die Haselnüss',
Und schwarzbraun bin auch ich,
Und wenn mich einer lieben will,
So muss er sein wie ich,**

rang her saucy song through the echoing passage.

A melancholy smile rose to *Ekkehard's* lips.

But the tempest in his heart was not yet wholly calmed. It resounded and reverberated within like the thunder-claps of an Alpine storm, which on the

* "*Dark-brown are the hazel-nuts,
And dark-brown too am I,
And he who would my lover be,
Must be the same as I!*"

distant mountain sides collect its forces for new onsets.

A gigantic slab had fallen down beside his cavern. Melting snow-water had undermined it in the spring. It resembled a grave-stone. There he often sat, and he mentally christened it the grave of his love. Sometimes he fancied the duchess and himself lying under it, sleeping the calm sleep of the dead; and he sat on it and looked over the pine-clad green mountain slopes far away toward the Bodensee and —dreamed. It was not well for him that he could see the lake from his cell. His soul was tortured by painful recollections; often he would break out into angry exclamations; often at eventide he would lean far out beyond the edge of his crag in the direction of the Untersee, and breathe out greetings.²⁶² For whom were they meant?

His dreams at night were wild and confused. He would find himself again in the castle-chapel, and the everlasting lamp was swinging over the duchess's head as it did then; but when he rushed toward her, she had the face of the Forest woman, and grinned at him scoffingly; and when, in the early morning, he sprang up from his bed of straw, he would hear his own heart wildly beating, and Frau Hadwig's words, "Oh, schoolmaster, why did not Heaven make you a warrior?" would persecute him till the sun had risen high in the sky, or the sight of *Benedicta* had banished them.

Often he threw himself down on the short, soft grass on the slope, and thought over the previous months. In the purifying keenness of the Alpine air,

figures and events assumed clearer outlines before his mind, and he was tormented by the thought that he had behaved in a timid, cowardly, and foolish manner, and had not even fulfilled his task by telling a story as Praxedis and Herr Spazzo had done.

“Ekkehard, thou hast made thyself ridiculous,” muttered he to himself; and then he felt as if he must dash his head against the rocks.

A melancholy disposition broods long over a wrong that it has undergone, and forgets that a blame-worthy action is only blotted out in the memory of others by better ones following.

Therefore Ekkehard was not as yet ripe for the healing delights of solitude. The ever-present recollection of past suffering had a strange effect on him. When he sat all alone in his silent cavern, he fancied he heard voices that mockingly talked to him of foolish hopes, and the deceits of this world. The flight and calls of birds seemed to him the shrieks of demons, and his prayers were of no avail against them.

When the terrors of the wilderness fill the mind, eye and ear are easily deceived, and there seems truth in the old legends which assert that the lower and the upper regions of the air, and the earth itself wherever it is uncultivated,²⁶³ are filled by the masquerading of ever living spirits.

It was a soft fragrant night late in the summer. Ekkehard was just about to throw himself down on his simple bed, when the moon brightly lighted the cavern. Two white clouds were slowly sailing along,

one behind the other ; he heard them as they talked together, and the one cloud was Frau Hadwig, the other Praxedis.

“ I should really like to see what the retreat of a runaway fool looks like,” said the first white cloud ; and swiftly hurrying over the crest of the perpendicular walls, it stood on the Kamor, right opposite the cavern ; then it floated down to the fir-trees which grew along the valley in countless ranks.

“ There he is !” cried the cloud. “ Seize the blasphemer.”

And the fir-trees sprang into life, and became monks, thousands and thousands of them ; and, chanting psalms and swinging rods, they swarmed out and began to climb the rocks toward the Wildkirchlein.

Trembling with terror, Ekkehard leaped up and seized his spear ; but now it was as if a host of will-o'-the-wisps started out from the recesses of the cavern.

“ Away with you, out from the Alps !” cried they behind him.

All his pulses throbbed with fever ; so he ran away, over the narrow path along the frightful precipice, into the dark night, like a madman.

The second cloud was still standing beside the moon : “ I can not help thee,” it said, in Praxedis's voice ; “ I know not the way.” . . .

Down the mountain he ran. Life was a torture to him ; and yet he groped along the shelving brink, and braced with his spear, so as not to plunge off and thus fall into the hands of the approaching spectres.

His nocturnal slide down the Hohentwiel was child's play compared to this. Unconscious of danger, he darted past precipices, and at last reached the bottom. The goats would fall down there and be dashed to pieces, if they turned their eyes away from the grass, and gazed into the neck-breaking depth below.

Now he was in the valley: there lay mysteriously beckoning the green Seealpsee, over which the moonbeams trembled. The rotten tree-trunks on the shores gave forth a spectral light. Ekkehard's eyes grew dim.

‘Take me,’ he cried. ‘My heart must have rest.’

He ran into the soft silent water, but his feet were still on the bottom; deliciously cooling, the freshness of the mountain lake penetrated to the very marrow of his bones. He was already up to his breast in the water; then he stopped, and looked up confusedly. The white clouds had disappeared, dissolved by the moon into transparent vapors. Magnificently yet sadly glittered star upon star high above his head.

In bold fantastic lines the Möglisalp stretched up toward the moon, its crest grass-covered clear to its highest height. On its left, calm and serious, rose the furrowed head of the ‘old man,’ and to the right, towering above its double belt of glaciers, the gray pyramid of the Säntis, surrounded by crags and pinnacles, like frightful spectres of the night.

And Ekkehard knelt down on the stony bottom of the lake, so that the waters closed over his head; then he got to his feet again, and stood motionless, with lifted arms, like one who prays.²⁶⁴

The moon went down behind the Säntis; a bluish

light played over the old snow of the glaciers. A racking pain darted through Ekkehard's brain. The mountains around him began to rock and dance; a wailing sound streamed through the forests; the lake foamed up; its waves were alive with thousands and thousands of half-grown frogs, still having their black tadpole forms. . . .

But in soft dewy beauty arose the figure of a woman²⁶⁵ and floated up to the top of the Möglisalp. There she sat in the soft velvety green, and shook the water from her long streaming tresses, and made herself a wreath of Alpine flowers.

In the depths of the mountains there was a crashing sound. The Säntis stretched himself up to his full height, and so did "the old man" to his right. Like the heaven-storming Titans of old, they raged against each other. The Säntis seized his rocks and hurled them over, and "the old man" tore off his head and flung it at the pyramid of the Säntis. Now the Säntis stood on the right side, and "the old man" was flying before him to the left; but the lady of the lake looked on in smiling composure, and from her mountain-peak mocked the stone combatants. And she wrung out her yellow curls, and from them poured a pearly waterfall; and it flowed down wilder, and it flowed down fiercer, till it whirled the maiden with the liquid eyes back into the lake.

Upon this the uproar and strife suddenly ceased. "The old man" took up his head, put it on again, and singing a sad, mournful jodel, he returned to the valley where he belonged. And the Säntis likewise

was in his old place, and his glaciers were glittering as before.

When Ekkehard awoke the next morning, he lay in his cavern shaken with feverish cold. His knees felt as if they were broken.

The sun stood at his zenith.

Benedicta flitted past the cavern, and saw him lying there trembling, with his wolf's-skin mantle thrown over him. His cowl hung heavy and dripping over a piece of rock.

"The next time you go trout-fishing in the Seealpssee," said she, "let me know, so that I can lead you. The goat-boy who met you before sunrise, said you had come staggering up the mountain like a man walking in his sleep."

She went and rang the midday bell for him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON THE EBENALP.

FOR six days Ekkehard was ill. The herdsmen nursed him; an elixir of steeped gentian took away the fever. The Alpine air did its part. A great shock had been necessary to restore his physical and mental equilibrium. Now he was all right again, and no longer heard voices or saw phantoms. A comfortable feeling of repose and recuperating health stirred in him. It was that state of indolent weakness so pleasant to persons recovering from melancholy. His thoughts were serious, but no longer bitter.

“I have learnt something from the mountains,” said he to himself. “Storming avails nothing; even though the most enchanting of maidens were sitting before us, we must be of stone like the Säntis, and put a cooling armor of ice round the heart; and dreamy night herself must scarcely know how it burns and glows within. That is best.”

And gradually the grief of the past months was transfigured as through a soft haze. He thought of the duchess and all that had happened on the Hohentwiel, and it brought him never a pang. And this is the wonderful thing about mighty Nature, that she not only presents herself as a powerfully

working picture before the spectator, but also stimulates and enlarges the mind, and conjures back to memory distant days forever past.

It had been long since Ekkehard had cast a retrospective glance on the period of his youth; but now his thoughts found their chief pleasure in flying there, as if it had been a paradise, out of which the storm of life had driven him. He had spent several years in the monastery-school at Lorsch on the Rhine. At that time he had no idea what heart-consuming fire could be hidden in a woman's dark eyes. Then the old parchments were his world.

One figure out of that time had, however, been faithfully outlined on the tablet of his heart; and that was Brother Konrad of Alzey. On him, his senior by a few years, Ekkehard had lavished the first affection of youthful friendship. Their paths in life became different; grass had grown over the days of Lorsch. But now they rose warm and glowing in his thoughts, like some dark hill in a plain when the morning sun casts his first rays on it.

It is with the human mind as with the crust of this old earth of ours. On the alluvium of childhood new strata heap themselves up in stormy eruption, — rocks and ridges and high mountains which strive to reach up to heaven; and the ground on which they stand is covered with débris and forgotten. But just as the stern peaks of the Alps look longingly down into the valleys, and often, overwhelmed by homesickness, plunge down into the depths from which they rose, so memory goes back

to youth, and digs for the treasures which were left thoughtlessly behind beside the worthless stones.

Ekkehard's thoughts now often recurred to his faithful companion. Once more he stood beside him in the vaulted, pillar-supported hall. With him he prayed beside the mausoleums of the old kings, and the stone sarcophagus of the blind Duke Thasilo. With him he walked through the shady lanes of the cloister-garden, listening to his words;—and all that Konrad had spoken then was good and noble, for he looked at the world with a poet's eye, and it was as if flowers must spring up on his way, and birds carol a jocund accompaniment when his lips opened to honey-sweet discourse.

“Look, child of immortality!” Konrad had once said to his young friend as they were looking down over the land from the parapet of the garden. “Yonder, where the white sand dunes rise from the green fields, it was once a vast sheet of water, and the sweep of the river Neckar. Thus the traces of past human history run through the fields of their descendants, and 'tis well if these pay them some attention; and here on the shores of the Rhine we stand on hallowed ground, and it were time that we set to collecting what has grown on it before the tedious *trivium* and *quadrivium* kill our appreciation of it.”

And in the merry holiday-time Konrad and he had wandered through the Odenwald; there, in a glen hidden by green drooping birch-trees, trickled a spring. Out of this they drank, and Konrad said:—

“Bow down thy head, for this is the grove of the dead,* and Hagen’s beech-tree and Siegfried’s Fountain. Here the best of all heroes was wounded in the back by the spear of the grim Hagen, so that the flowers around were bedewed with the red blood. Yonder, on the Sedelhof, Chriemhildis mourned for her slain husband, until the messengers of the Hunnic king came to woo the young widow.”

And he told him all the old legends about the princely castle at Worms, and the Nibelungen treasure, and the revenge of Chriemhildis, and his eyes sparkled.

“Give me thy hand!” he cried to his young friend. “When we are men, and well versed in poetry, then we will erect a memorial in honor of the legends of the Rhine. Even now there is fermenting and boiling within me a mighty song of heroic prowess and perils, vengeance and death, and I know the horny Siegfried’s art of making himself invulnerable, even though there are no more dragons to be slain, or dragon’s blood to be boiled; for every one who with a pure heart breathes the mountain air and bathes his brow in the morning dew is gifted with the same knowledge. He can hear what the birds are singing in the trees, and what the winds tell of old legends, and he becomes strong and powerful; and if his heart is in the right place, he will write it down for the benefit of others.”

Ekkehard had looked half abashed at his enthusiastic, audacious companion, and said:—

* *Der Totenhain.*

“It makes me almost dizzy to hear how thou proposest to become another Homer.”

And Konrad had replied smilingly :—

“No one will dare compose another Iliad after Homer ; but the song of the Nibelungen has not yet been sung, and my arm is young, and my courage undaunted, and who knows what the course of time may bring !”

And another time they were walking together on the brink of the Rhine, and the sun was shining down from the Wasgau mountains, and sparkling in the ripples, when Konrad said :—

“For thee I also know a song, which is simple and not too wild, and just right for thy disposition ; for thou preferrest the notes of a hunting-horn to the roar of thunder. Look up ! Just as to-day, the towers of Worms were shining and glistening in the sun when the hero Waltari of Aquitania, escaping from bondage among the Huns, came to Franconia. Here the ferry-man rowed him across with his sweetheart and his golden treasure. He rode through that dark purple forest that we see over yonder, and at the Wasichenstein there was a fierce fighting ; the sparks flew from helmets and shields, for the knights of Worms went out to attack him. But his love and a good conscience made Waltari strong, so that he held out against them all, even against King Gunther and the grim Hagen.”

And Konrad told him the whole legend from beginning to end.

“Around huge trees,” he said, “all sorts of wild underbrush spring up ; and so round the Nibelungen

Saga there has grown a whole jungle of other legends, out of which one who takes pleasure in such things can make a fine work. Sing the *Waltari!*”

But Ekkehard was just then making pebbles skip over the water, and he only half understood his friend. He was a devoted scholar, and his mind was bent on the task before him. Time separated the two friends, and Konrad had to fly from the monastery-school because he had said that Aristotle's logic was mere straw. So he had gone out into the wide world, no one knew whither; and Ekkehard came to St. Gall, and studied on and on, and became a young man of discretion, deemed fit for a professor; and he sometimes thought of Konrad of Alzey with something almost akin to pity.

But a good seed-corn may lie hidden in a human heart for a long time, and yet at last germinate and bud, like the wheat from mummy-cases of Egypt.

That Ekkehard now delighted in dwelling on these recollections was a proof that he had become another man. And this was well. The caprices of the duchess and the unconscious grace of Praxedis had refined his shy and awkward manners. The great times through which he had passed, the hurly-burly battle with the Huns, had given a bolder flight to his aspirations, and taught him to despise the paltry intrigues of petty ambition. And now he bore in his heart a great sorrow, which had to be fought down; and so the monastery-scholar, in spite of cowl and tonsure, had by a happy transformation become a poet, and he moved to and fro like a serpent which has broken out of its old skin, and only

waits an opportunity to strip off against a hedge its entire covering like a shabby old coat.

Daily and hourly, as he contemplated the ever-beautiful peaks of his mountains, and drew in deep breaths of the pure air, it seemed more and more of a riddle to him how he could ever have thought to find his life's happiness in poring over and expounding yellow parchment-leaves, and how afterwards he had almost lost his reason on account of a proud woman.

“O my heart, let what has not strength to stand, fall,” said he, “and build thyself a new world; build it deep within thee, — wide, proud, and high, — and let the river of the Past flow forever by!”

He was already feeling quite cheerful again as he walked about in his hermitage; one evening after he had rung the vesper-bell the master of the Ebenalp came to him, carrying something carefully in a handkerchief.

“God's greeting, mountain-brother,” said he. “Well, you have had a good shaking-fit, and I have brought you something as an after-cure. But I see that your cheeks are red and your eyes bright: so it is not needed.”

He opened his handkerchief and displayed a swarming ant-hill, — ants old and young, with a quantity of dry pine needles. He shook the industrious little creatures down over the precipice.

“You would have had to sleep on that to-night,” said he, laughing. “Their bites take away the last trace of fever!”

“It is past,” said Ekkehard. “I thank you for the medicine!”

"But you had better keep yourself warm," said the herdsman: "a black cloud is streaming up over the Brülltobel, and the toads are coming out of their holes; the weather is going to change."

The next morning all the peaks shone out in fresh dazzling white. A heavy snow had fallen. Yet it was still much too early for the beginning of winter. The sun rose brightly and tormented the snow with his rays, so that it almost repented having fallen.

When Ekkehard that evening was sitting before his pitch-pine torch, he heard a crashing and roaring as if the mountains were toppling over. He started, and put his hand up to his forehead, fearing that the fever was coming back.

But it was no fancy of a disordered brain.

A hollow echo boomed forth from the other side, rolling through the gorges of the Sigelsalp and the Maarwiese. Then there followed a sound like the breaking of mighty trees,—a shattering fall, and it died away. But a low plaintive murmur sounded all night long, coming up from the valley.

Ekkehard did not sleep. Since his experiences by the Seealpsee he had no confidence in himself. Early in the morning he went up to the Ebenalp. Benedicta was standing before the herdsman's hut, and greeted him with a snow-ball. The herdsman laughed when questioned about the night's disturbance.

"That music you will hear often enough," said he. "An avalanche fell into the valley."

"And the roaring?"

"Must have been your own snoring."

“But I did not sleep,” said Ekkehard.

So they went down with him and listened. It was like a distant moaning in the snow.

“Strange!” exclaimed the herdsman. “Some living thing must have been hurled down.”

“If Pater Lucius of Quaradaves were only alive,” said Benedicta, — “he had just such a soft, bear-like voice.”

“Hush, thou wild hoiden!” cried her father. Then they brought a shovel and Alpenstock; the old man took his hatchet and followed with Ekkehard along the track of the avalanche. It had fallen down from the precipice on the Aesher, over earth and rock, breaking the low fir-trees like straw. Three mighty crags, looking down into the valley like sentinels, stopped the fall. There the rolling snow had angrily heaped itself up; only a small part had gone dashing over this barrier. The chief bulk, broken to pieces by the violence of the encounter, was scattered in fantastic masses.

The herdsman laid his ear on the snow; then he advanced a few paces, and, thrusting in his mountain stick, cried: —

“We must dig here!”

And they shovelled a good while, and dug a shaft, so that they were deep in it, and the snow-walls rose high over their heads; and often they had to breathe on their hands during their cold work.

Then the herdsman uttered a loud jodel, and Ekkehard shouted; a black spot had become visible. The old man sprang for his hatchet; a few more shovelfuls, and a shaggy object arose heavily, and,

snorting and grunting, stretched out its forepaws toward heaven, like one trying to shake off overpowering sleep; and finally it slowly mounted the crag, and sat down.

It was a huge she-bear, who, on a nocturnal expedition after the trout in the Seealpsee, had been buried up with her spouse. But Bruin did not stir. He had been stifled by her side, and lay there in the cold sleep of death, — a spiteful expression around his snout, as if he had left this sweet life with a curse on the all too early snow.

The herdsman wanted to attack the she-bear with his hatchet; but Ekkehard restrained him, saying: "Let her live! One will be enough for us!"

Then they dragged the bear out, and together could hardly stir him. The she-bear sat on her rock and gazed down mournfully, and growled and cast a tearful look on Ekkehard, as if she had understood what he said. Then she came down slowly, but not as if with hostile intent. The men were twisting fir-branches into a sort of barrow on which to drag their booty along. They both stepped back, hatchet and spear ready for use; but the bear-widow bent down over her dead spouse, and bit off his right ear, and ate it up as a memorial of the happy past. Then she turned to Ekkehard, walking on her hind-legs. He was alarmed at the threat of a hug; so he made the sign of the cross, and pronounced St. Gallus's conjuration against bears: *Get thee hence, and depart from our valley, thou monster of the wood. Mountains and Alpine ravines be thy realm; but leave us and the herds of this Alm in peace.*²⁶⁶

And the she-bear stopped, with a bitter, melancholy look in her eyes, as if she felt hurt at this disdain of her friendly feelings. She dropped down on her fore-legs, and turning her back on the man who had thus banished her, walked away on all fours. Yet twice she looked back before she entirely disappeared from the sight of the mountaineers.

“Such a beast has the intelligence of a dozen men, and can read a person’s will in his eyes,” said the herdsman. “Else I should think you a saint, whom the inhabitants of the wilderness obey.”

He weighed the paws of the dead bear in his hand: “Juhuhu! that will be a feast! These we will eat together, mountain-brother, next Sunday, with a little salad made of Alpine herbs. The meat will be ample provision for us both through the winter, and for the skin we will cast lots.”

While they were dragging the victim of the avalanche up to the Wildkirchlein, *Benedicta* sang:—

*And he who digs for snow-drops,
And Fortune favors fair,
May sometime dig a Bruin out,
And may dig out a pair.*

The snow had been a jolly *Flutterschnee*,²⁶⁷ and it soon melted again. Summer came back once more to the mountains with heart-warming vigor, and a peaceful Sabbath stillness lay over the highlands.

Ekkehard had helped the herdsman and his daughter devour the bear’s paws at dinner. It was a savory dish, coarse, but hearty, like the old pioneers themselves.

Then he mounted the top of the Ebenalp, and threw himself down on the fragrant grass, and gazed contentedly up at the blue sky, and felt his frame glow with the comfortable sense of health.

Benedicta's goats were grazing around him, and he could hear the juicy Alpine-grass bending and crunching between their sharp teeth. Restless clouds were drifting along the mountain-sides.

On a white lime-stone shelf facing the Säntis sat Benedicta. She was playing on her flute.* Simple, melodious, like a voice from the distant days of youth, sounded the melody. With two wooden milkspoons in her left hand she beat time. She was a past-mistress in this art, and her father would often say regretfully: —

“'T is really a pity! She ought to have been called Benedictus, as she would really have made a capital herdsman.”

When the air came to a rythmical ending, she gave a shrill jodel-cry toward the neighboring alp. And in answer came the soft swelling notes of an Alpine horn. Her sweetheart, the herdsman on the Klus, was standing under the dwarf fir-tree, blowing the *ranz des vachès*,²⁶⁸ — that strange, primitive music, which, unlike any other melody, seems at first a suppressed buzzing, such as might be produced by a bumble-bee or beetle imprisoned in a horn and searching for an outlet, but which, little by little and little by little, trumpets that wondrous song of longing, love, and home-sickness into the inmost re-

* Called *Schwegelpfeife*.

cesses of the human heart, so that it either swells with rapturous joy or breaks with sorrow.

"I think you are quite well again, mountain-brother," cried Benedicta to Ekkehard, "as you are lying so contentedly on your back. Do you like the music?"

"Yes," said Ekkehard; "play some more!"

He could not gaze his fill on all the beauty around him. To the left, in silent grandeur, stood the Säntis, with his kindred; he already knew every single peak by name, and greeted them as his dear neighbors. Before him spread a confused mass of lower mountains and hills, luxuriant green meadow-lands, and dark forests. A part of the Rhine valley, bordered by the heights of the Arlberg and the distant Rhætian Alps, gleamed up at him. A hazy veil of mist indicated the mirror of the Bodensee which it covered;—all was wide and grand and beautiful.

Whoever has felt the mysterious influence which reigns on airy mountain-peaks and widens and ennobles the human heart, raising it heavenwards in free soaring of thoughts, is filled with a sort of smiling pity when he thinks of those who, in the depth below, are dragging bricks and sand together for the building of new towers of Babel; and he unites in that joyous mountain-cry which the herdsmen say is equal to the Lord's Prayer before God.

The sun was standing over the Kronberg, inclining toward the west, and deluging the heavens with a coruscating golden fire, and sending his jocund rays down into the mists over the Bodensee. And now the white veil dissolved; in delicate, tantalizing

azure lay the Untersee before Ekkehard's gaze; his eyes grew keen in the sunset glory; he saw a vanishing dark spot, which was the island of Reichenau; he saw a mountain, — it scarcely rose above the horizon, but he knew it well, — it was the Hohentwiel.

And the *ranz des vaches* accompanied the tinkling of the cow-bells, and warmer and warmer grew the coloring over all the Alps. Golden-brown-green glowed the meadows. A faint roseate hue tinged the gray lime-stone walls of the Kämor.

Then into Ekkehard's soul also there came a glow and splendor. His thoughts flew away over into the distant Hegau; it was to him as if he were again sitting with Frau Hadwig on the Hohenstoffeln just as when they celebrated Cappan's wedding, and he seemed to see Audifax and Hadumoth coming home from the Huns, and they appeared to him the very embodiment of earthly happiness; and there, out of the dust and rubbish of the past, arose what the eloquent Konrad of Alzey had once told him of Walthari and Hiltgunde. With rhyme and chime the spirit of poesy entered his mind. He sprang up and cut a caper in the air, in a way that must have pleased the Säntis. In the imagery of poetry the poor heart may rejoice in what life can never give it, — in giant battles and requited love.

“I will sing the song of Walthari of Aquitania!” cried he to the setting sun; and it was as if he saw, standing between the Sigelsalp and the Maarwiese, the friend of his youth, Meister Konrad, in robes of light, smilingly waving his hand to him and saying, “Do it!”

And Ekkehard enthusiastically set to work. "What is done here must be well done, or not at all, else the mountains will laugh at us," the herdsman had said to him one day; and he had nodded a hearty assent.

The goat-boy was to be sent down the mountain to fetch up eggs and honey; so Ekkehard begged his master to give him a holiday, and intrusted him with a letter to his nephew at St. Gall. He wrote it in a cipher ²⁶⁹ well known at the monastery, so that no meddlesome person could read it. The contents of the letter were as follows:—

To the cloister-pupil Burkard greeting and blessings:—

Thou who hast been an eye-witness of thy uncle's sorrow wilt know how to be silent. And ask not where he now is; God's hand reaches far. Thou hast read in Procopius ²⁷⁰ of Gelimer, king of the Vandals; how, when he was a prisoner in the Numidian mountains, and when his grief was great, he entreated his enemies to give him a harp, so that he might give voice to his sorrow. Consider thy uncle as in similar straits, and kindly give the bearer one of your small harps, and a few sheets of clean parchment, together with colors and pens; for my heart in its loneliness also feels inclined to sing a song. Burn this letter. God's blessing be with thee! Farewell!

"Thou must be wary and cautious, as if thou wert going to an eagle's nest to take the young ones out,"

said Ekkehard to the goat-boy. "Ask for the monastery-pupil who was with Romeias the watchman when the Huns came. Give the letter to him. Nobody else need know about it."

The goat-boy put his forefinger to his lips. "With us no tales are repeated," he replied. "The mountain-air makes one beware."

Two days later he came back up the mountain. He unpacked the contents of his wicker basket before Ekkehard's cavern. Carefully hidden under green oak-leaves was a small harp with ten strings,—three-cornered like the form of a Greek delta,—colors and writing-material, and a quantity of clean soft parchment-leaves with ruled lines, so that the letters might be even and straight.

But the goat-boy looked sullen and gloomy.

"Thou hast done thy errand well," said Ekkehard.

"You won't catch me going down there a second time," grumbled the boy, clenching his young fist.

"Why not?"

"Because there is no room there for such as I. In the little room for strangers I inquired for the pupil and did the errand. After that I wanted to see what sort of young saints those might be who went to school there with cowls on, and I went into the garden where the young gentlemen were playing with dice and drinking wine, as it was a recreation day.²⁷¹ I looked on while they were throwing stones at a mark, and playing a game with sticks, and I could not help laughing, because it was all so weak and ridiculous. And they wanted to know

what I was laughing at; and so I took up a stone and threw it twenty paces farther than the best of them, and I cried out:—

“‘What a set of snipes you are, trying to play a decent game while you have long dresses on! I could n’t challenge you to a good wrestling-match,* or to a bout at single staff. You are n’t worth it.’

“And then they went for me with their sticks; but I seized the one next to me, and sent him flying through the air, so that he dropped into the grass like a lamed mountain-rook; and then they all raised a great cry, and declared that I was a coarse mountain-lout, and that their strength lay in science and intellect. Then I wanted to know what intellect was, and they said, ‘Drink some wine, and afterwards we will write it on thy back!’ And the cloister-wine was good; I drank a couple of jugfuls, and they wrote something on my back. I can’t think how it happened; but the next morning I had a bad headache, and I know nothing more about their intellect than I did before.”

Tearing open his coarse linen shirt, he showed Ekkehard his back, on which was written with black cart-grease, in large capital letters, this inscription:

ABBATISCELLANI,
HOMINES PAGANI,
VANI ET INSANI,
TURGIDI VILLANI.†

* *Hosenluff.*

† *Those from Abtszellen are heathen louts,
Coarse and wild, stuck up boors.*

It was a monastic joke. Ekkehard had to laugh.

“Don't mind it,” said he; “and remember that it is thy own fault, as thou hast looked too deep in the wine-jug.”

The goat-boy, however, was not pacified.

“My black goats are far^r dearer to me than all those youngers,” said he, buttoning his shirt again. “But if ever I catch such a milksop, such a chicken-liver, on the Ebenalp, I will write something on his hide with unburnt ashes that he will not forget as long as he lives; and if he is not satisfied with that, he may fly down the precipice like an avalanche in spring.”

Still grumbling, the boy went away.

But Ekkehard took the harp, and sat down at the foot of the cross before his cavern, and played a joyous air. It had been a long time since he had last touched the chords, and it was a marvellous delight for him in that vast solitude to give vent in low tuneful melodies to the thoughts and feelings that were stirring in his heart. And Music was a good ally in the work of Poesy. The *Waltharilied*, which at first had hovered before him like a distant mist, condensed itself and took form, and passed across his mental vision in life-glowing pictures. He closed his eyes to see them still better: then he beheld the Huns approaching, — a race of nimble, jovial horsemen, less repulsive than those against whom he himself had fought but a few months ago; and they carried off the royal offspring from Franconia and Aquitania as hostages, — Walthari and the fair Hiltgund, the joy of Burgundy. And as he

struck the chords with greater force, he also beheld King Etzel himself, who was of tolerable mien, and inclined to gayety and the joys of the cup. And the royal children were brought up at the Hunnic court; and when they were grown, a feeling of home-sickness came over them, and they remembered how they had been betrothed to each other from the days of their childhood.

Then there arose a clinking of glasses and blowing of trumpets, — the Huns were holding a banquet; King Etzel quaffed the mighty drinking-cup, and the others followed his example. The heavy sleep of drunken men echoed through the halls. . . . Now he saw how in the moonlight the young Aquitanian hero saddled the war-horse, and Hiltegunde came and brought the Hunnic treasure. He lifted her up into the saddle! Hei! how gallantly they galloped out of thralldom! . . .

And as they rode farther and farther away, they met other perils, and they fled, and they crossed the Rhine; and then came fierce battle with the grasping King Gunther.

In large bold outlines before him stood the whole story which he intended to glorify in simple epic song.

That very same night Ekkehard remained sitting up with his pitch-pine knot and began his work: and a joy came over him as the figures sprang into life under his hand, — a great and honest joy; for in the exercise of the poetic art, man elevates himself to the deed of the Creator, who caused a world to spring forth out of nothing.

The next day found him eagerly busying himself with the first adventures. He himself could not

explain by what law he interwove the threads of his poem ; and in truth it is not necessary to know the why and wherefore of everything.

*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit, says the gospel of John.*²⁷²

And if now and then his vision grew dim and doubts assailed him, — for he was timid by nature, and often thought that it was scarcely possible to attain to anything without the help of books and learned models, — then he would walk up and down the narrow path before his cavern, and fasten his eyes on the gigantic walls of his mountains, and they would inspire him with comfort and serenity ; and he would say to himself : —

“ In all that I write and conceive I will merely ask myself if the Sântis and the Kamor are satisfied.”

And thus he was on the right track ; for the poetry of him who receives his inspiration from old Mother Nature will be genuine and true, even though the linen-weavers and stone-cutters and the respectable brotherhood of straw-splitters in the depth below may ten thousand times declare it to be a mere fantastical chimera.

Some days were thus spent in industrious work. The figures of his Saga were clothed in the Latin verse of Vergil ; the paths of the German mother-tongue struck him as being still too rough and uneven for the fair measured pace of his epic. More and more peopled became his solitude every day. At first he thought to continue his work day and night,

without any interruption; but the physical man has its rights, so he said:—

“He who works, must regulate his daily labor by the sun.”

And when the shadows of evening fell on the neighboring heights, he broke off, seized his harp, and climbed with it through his cavern wilderness to the Ebenalp. The spot where the first idea of the epic had entered his mind had become very dear to him.

Benedicta welcomed him joyfully when he came for the first time with his harp.

“I understand you, mountain-brother,” said she. “Because you are not allowed to have a sweetheart, you have taken to a harp, and you tell it what swells your heart. But it shall not be in vain that you have become a musician.”

She whistled through her fingers and made a capital signal toward the low-thatched cottage on the Klus. Then came her sweetheart, the herdsman, with his Alpine horn. He was a stalwart young fellow. In his right ear he wore the heavy silver ring, the herdsman’s badge of honor, representing a serpent which on a tiny silver chain holds the slender milkspoon, and around his waist glittered the broad belt, on which, chased in metal, was to be seen a monster animal like a cow.²⁷³ With shy curiosity he stood before Ekkehard; but Benedicta said:—

“Now play us a dance, mountain-brother. We have often regretted that we could not do it ourselves: but when he blows his horn, he can not take me and swing me round at the same time; and when I play my flute, I have not an arm free either.”

And Ekkehard was glad at the wholesome merriment of these children of the mountains, and plucked stoutly at the strings; and they danced on the soft meadow grass until the moon rose in golden beauty over the Maarwiese. They greeted her with a shout of delight, ²⁷⁴ and kept on with their dance; singing in pleasant alternation . . .

*Und das Eis kam gewachsen
Bis zur Alpe daher,
Wie Schad' um das Mägdlein
Wenn's eingefroren wär' !*

sang Benedicta's lover, gayly whirling her round;

*Und der Föhn hat geblasen,
Kein Hüttlein mehr steht —
Wie Schad' um den Buben
Wenn's auch ihn hätt' verweht !**

she replied in the same measure.

And when tired with dancing, they rested beside the young poet. Benedicta said: —

“ Some day you will also get your reward, you dear kind music-maker! There is an old legend in our mountains that once in every hundred years a wondrous blue flower blooms on the bare crag; and for

** And the ice came growing
Down over the Alp;
Oh, pitiful the maiden's lot
If she had frozen to death !*

*And the Föhn-wind blew fiercely,
No hut could resist;
Oh, pitiful the laddie's lot
Had it blown him too away !*

him who has the flower, the mountains suddenly open, and he sees the bright glittering depths, and he can go in and take as much of the treasures as his heart desires, and fill his hat to the brim. If ever I find the flower, I will bring it to you, and then you 'll become a very, very rich man; for I should not need it (she threw her arm around the young herdsman), I have already found my treasure."

But Ekkehard replied, "Neither should I need it!"

He was right. He who has been initiated in art has found the genuine blue flower. Where others see rocks and stones piled up, he sees the vast realm of the Beautiful opening; there are treasures which rust doth not corrupt, and he is richer than all the money-changers and dealers and money-kings of the world, even though in his pocket the penny may often hold a sad wedding-feast with the farthing.

"Yes, but what shall we do then with the blue flower?" asked Benedicta.

"Give it to the goats to eat, or to the big bull-calf," said her lover, laughingly. "They also deserve a treat now and then."

And again they started to dance, and whirled each other around in the moon-light until Benedicta's father came climbing up. The old herdsman, after his day's labors were done,²⁷⁵ had nailed the bear's skull, already bleached by the sun, over the low door of his hut. He had stuck a piece of stalactite between the jaws, so that the goats and cows timidly ran away, scared by the new ornament.

"You stamp round so, and make such a rumpus,*

* *Ihr gumpet und rugusct.* 276

that the Sântis begins to tremble and quake," cried the old Alpmeister, before he came up to them. "What are you making such a noise for?" Good-naturedly scolding, he drove them into the hut.

The Waltharilied made rapid progress. When the heart is brimful of music, the hand must hurry to keep pace with the flight of thought.

One midday Ekkehard was just beginning his walk along the narrow rock path, when a strange visitor came to meet him. It was the she-bear which he had dug out of the snow. Slowly she climbed up the steep ascent, carrying something in her snout.

He darted back into his cave and got his spear; but the bear did not come as an enemy. Pausing respectfully at the entrance of his cavern, she laid down on a projecting ledge a fat marmot which she had caught playing in the sunny grass. Was it a present for having saved her life; was it the expression of other feelings, — who knows?

To be sure, Ekkehard had helped to consume the mortal remains of her spouse; — could some of the widow's affection have been thus transferred to him? — we know too little about the law of affinities . . .

The she-bear now sat down coyly before the cavern, steadfastly gazing in. Then Ekkehard was touched; still keeping his spear in his hand, he pushed a wooden plate with some honey toward her. But she only shook her head mournfully. The look in her little lidless eyes was melancholy and beseeching. So Ekkehard took down his harp from the wall, and began to play the melody which *Benedicta* had asked for.

This had a soothing effect on the deserted bear-widow's mind: she rose to her hind-legs, and walked backwards and forwards with rhythmical grace. And Ekkehard played faster and wilder; but she bashfully cast down her eyes, — her thirty-years-old bear-conscience did not sanction her dancing. Then she stretched herself out again before the cavern as if she wanted to deserve the praise which the author of the hymn in praise of St. Gallus once bestowed on the bears when he called them "animals possessing an admirable degree of modesty."²⁷⁷

"We two suit each other well," said Ekkehard. "Thou hast lost thy best love in the snow, and I mine in the tempest; I will play something more for thee."

He played a melancholy air, which pleased her well, as she gave an approving growl now and then. But Ekkehard, ever inwardly busy with his epic, at last said: "I have been thinking for a long time what name I should give to the Hunnic queen under whose guardianship young Hiltgund was placed; and now I have found one. Her name shall be *Ospirin*, the divine she-bear."²⁷⁸ Dost thou understand me?"

The bear looked at him as if she comprehended him; so Ekkehard drew forth his manuscript and added the name. The wish to make known the creation of his mind to some living being had for a long while been strong within him.

"Here in this vast mountain solitude," he said to himself, "even a bear may take the place which under other circumstances would have required some learned scholar."

And he stepped into his log-cabin, and leaning on his spear, read to the bear the beginning of his poem; and he read it with a loud voice, and as he were inspired, and she listened with laudable patience.

So he read further and further, — how the knights of Worms, chasing Walthari, entered the Wasgau forest, and fought with him by his rocky fastness, — and still she listened patiently; but when the single combat went on without end, — when Ekkefried of Saxony sank down on the grass a slain man, beside the bodies of his predecessors, and Hadwart, and Patafrid the nephew of Hagen, shared the lot of their companions, — then the bear slowly got up, as if in her opinion there was too much bloodshed for a lovely poem, and with dignified steps marched down the valley.

In a solitary cleft on the Sigelsalp opposite was her domicile. Thitherward she clambered to prepare for her long winter sleep.

But the epic which the she-bear of the Sigelsalp, first of all living beings, ever heard, the writer of this book rendered into German rhyme to while away long winter evenings; and though many worthy translators* have undertaken the same task, yet he did not like to withhold it from the reader in its proper connection with this history, for it is pleasant to see that in the tenth century, as well as in later ages, the spirit of poetry had set up her abode in the minds of chosen men.

* F. Molter, in unrhymed iambs, 1782; G. Klemm, 1827; G. Schwab, 1828, etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WALTHARILIED.²⁷⁹ *

WHEN Attila was king amongst the Huns, —
Whose fame had sounded over lands and seas,
Whose valiant hordes had conquered many kings,
Destroying all who ventured to resist,
And granting peace to those who bent their necks
Low in the dust before his mighty sword,
And paying heavy ransom thus were spared, —
One day the bugle sounded far and wide
Announcing that another war was near,
Calling the men to arms and then to horse,
To go where'er their leader should decree.
And Attila, when all had been prepared,
Spoke thus unto his men, who breathless stood
To hear what their great king would have to say:—
“Wearied of this long peace, I have resolved,
That though unasked, and like enough to be
Unwelcome too, we yet will tarry not
But pay a visit to the town of Worms,
Franconia's proud and noble capital.”
Scarce had he ended when a roaring shout
Broke on the silence like a cataract;

* English version by Sophie Delffs.

Loud rose and wild their joyous, swelling cry : —
“ Long live the king ! long live King Attila ! ”

Gay were the festivals then held at Worms
Where Gibich sat in his ancestral halls,
To celebrate the birth of his first son,
The heir which Heaven had denied him long.
But suddenly a pallor, icy cold,
Spread o'er his features, turning them to stone,
As if Medusa's head he had beheld ;
For in that evil moment he had heard
That from the Danube came a dreadful host
Of enemies, who soon would flood his land,
In numbers countless as the stars of heaven,
And swifter than the scorching desert-winds.
In frightened haste a council then was held,
In which the wisest men the land possessed
Were to decide what it were best to do.
And in this danger one and all agreed,
That, as resistance were mere idle boast,
'T were better not to irritate their foes
But offer tribute and give hostages ;
And rather give the something which they asked,
Than lose their all, — land, fortunes, with their lives.
But as King Gibich's son, Gunther by name,
Was but a suckling yet, as hostage he
Could not be sent, — Sir Hagen in his place,
Gibich's own cousin, was selected then,
A young and stalwart knight, whose pedigree
Proved his descent from noble Trojan blood.
So he was sent, with ample bags of gold,
To make the peace with Attila the Hun.

In those same days there reigned in Burgundy
King Herrich, with a strong and mighty hand ;
Whose only child, the gentle Hiltegund,
Was fairer far and lovelier to behold
Than any other maid in all the land
Whose future queen she one day was to be.
But when Franconia had obtained the peace,
The Huns with all their concentrated force
Approached the frontiers now of Burgundy ;
And at their head, towering about the rest,
There rode the king, the dreaded Attila.
Behind him, pressing forward eagerly,
A body-guard of noble Hunnic chiefs.
The earth re-echoed with their horses' tramp,
The clashing of their swords frightened the air,
And in the fields an iron wood of spears
Shone out with reddish light, like dewy meads
On which the sun is casting his first rays.
And thus they scaled the mountains, crossed the
streams ;
For nothing could impede their reckless speed.
Already they had passed the river Rhône,
And now came pouring in, a surging sea
Of men and riders, fearful to behold.
At Châlons sat King Herrich, fearing naught,
When from the belfry rose the watchman's cry : —
“ I see a cloud of dust, foreboding ill, —
Our enemies have come and so beware,
And shut your houses ere it be too late.”
The tale of how Franconia had escaped
By paying tribute had reached Herrich's ear,
Who now addressed his vassals in this way : —

“ Well do we know that brave and valiant men,
Franconia holds; and yet they did not dare
Resist the Huns, but made a treaty with
King Attila, and so I do not see
Why we, like fools, should risk to lose our lives.
One cherished daughter only I possess;
Yet for my country's weal I 'll offer her
As hostage to the Huns to guard the peace.”

Bare-headed and unarmed his messengers
Then went to meet the Huns and sans delay,
Into the presence of King Attila
They soon were brought, who did receive them well,
As was his wont, — to dissipate their fears, —
And then with gracious mien addressed them thus:
“ Indeed, believe me, I myself prefer
A friendly treaty far, to bloody war;
I am a man of peace, and only fight
Against the wanton fools who dare to doubt
The power which I hold from Heaven's self:
Therefore your master's offer I accept.”
This message then was brought unto the king,
Who now went out himself, accompanied
By a long train of heavy-laden men
Bearing the gold and jewels manifold
Which as a tribute to the Huns he paid.
And by the hand, fair as the morning star,
He led his only daughter, Hiltegun.
The peace was signed, — farewell, sweet Hiltegun,
The pearl of Burgundy, its hope and joy.
Full of content at this new treaty made,
King Attila now led his warriors brave

On to the west, to Aquitania,
Where Alpher swayed the sceptre, strong and brave.
An only son, Walthari, was his pride,
Who, yet a boy, promised one day to be
All that a father's heart could wish to see.
Herrich and Alpher, old and faithful friends,
With many a solemn oath on either side
Had long decreed that when the time should come
Their children's hands in wedlock should be joined.
Sadly King Alpher brooded in his halls
On that which it behooved him now to do.
"Alack!" he cried, "that in my hoary days
I can not find my death by lance or sword;
But now that Burgundy has deigned to crave
A shameful peace such as Franconia's king
First did conclude, what now is left to me
But do the same? — despatch my messengers
And offer bribes of gold, and, worse than all,
My only son as hostage to the foe!"
Thus spoke King Alpher and so was it done.
Laden with gold, the Huns returnèd home,
With Hagen, Hiltegund, and Alpher's son;
They gladly greeted their Pannonian home,
And here our captives led no evil life,
For Attila was not a cruel man
By nature; — so he had them treated well,
Almost as if they 'd been his flesh and blood.
The maiden Hiltgund to his wife the queen —
Ospirin was her name — intrusted was,
While the two princes he himself took care
To see well-taught in all the warlike arts,
Neglecting nothing fitted for their rank.

And so they grew in years and wisdom too,
Outstripping all in strength and witty speech,
For which the king did love them both alike
And placed them high above the noble Huns.
The German maiden, too, soon won the heart
Of Ospirin the proud and haughty queen.
The soft and winning ways of fair Hiltgund
Did gain her confidence, until at last
She made her keeper of the treasure-room.
Next to the queen she was in honor held ;
Her slightest wish, scarce uttered, was obeyed.

Meanwhile King Gibich fell a prey to death,
So that his throne was now by Gunther held,
Who broke the treaty made with Attila,
And offer'd scoff and taunts instead of gold
Unto the messengers that he had sent.
As soon as Hagen heard this welcome news,
He fled by night, and safely reached the court
Of Gunther, who received him full of joy.
Great was the sorrow in the morning, when
King Attila first heard of Hagen's flight ;
And with a cunning mien the queen spoke thus :
" Oh, lord and spouse, I warn thee to beware,
Lest Walter too, thy pillar of support,
Try to escape, like to his faithless friend.
Therefore, I pray thee, follow my advice,
And to Walthari say with friendly speech :
' In many battles thou hast proved thy arm
Strong and untiring in thy master's cause.
Therefore I fain would give thee now some sign
Of my approving love and gratitude.

Of all the noble Hunnic maidens here,
I bid thee choose the best to be thy wife,
And what of goods and lands thou wilt demand,
It shall be granted, ere you say the word.' ”

These words well pleased the king, and showed him
how

A woman's cunning often hits the mark
Which has escaped the prudent eye of man.
And so he bade Walthari come to him,
And told him all the queen had said before.
But though his words he temptingly set forth,
Walthari, guessing all that lay beneath,
And having long before formed other plans,
With subtle speech his fears tried to dispel.
“ Oh, prince, all I have done is quickly told,
And scarce deserves the kindly praise you deign
To lavish on my poor though faithful deeds.
But if I were to follow your command,
And take a wife, my time would be engrossed
By other cares and duties manifold ;
Which all would serve to make me turn away,
And leave the path of honor by your side.
For when you love a wife, you dislike war,
Which is to tear you from her loving arms.
And so, my gracious lord I do beseech
Not thus to banish me from his dear side.
And never, when you order me to fight,
By night or day, my sword you 'll idle find ;
And in the midst of battle ne'er my eyes
Shall be found looking backwards toward the spot
Where wife and children I did leave behind, —

A thought to lame my arm and dim my eye.
Therefore, by your own valor and my own,
I beg you not to force this yoke on me."

Then Attila was touched, and in his soul
He thought, "Walthari never thinks of flight!"
Meanwhile rebellion dared to raise her head
In distant lands, amongst another tribe,
Against whose province war was now proclaimed,
And young Walthari then was namèd chief
Of all the army; and it was not long
Before a battle ragèd long and fierce.
Full valiantly they fought, the Hunnic hordes,
Filling the air with their redundant cries,
To which the trumpets joined their piercing voice.
Like glaring sheets of lightning flew the spears,
Splitting the shields and helmets of the foe;
And as the pelting hailstones in a storm,
So fell the arrows, swift and merciless.
And wilder still and fiercer grew the fight,
Until they drew the sword, and man to man they
fought.

Then many a rider lay with fractured skull,
Beside his horse, felled by the self-same sword.
And in the foremost ranks Walthari fought,
As if King Death himself with nimble scythe
Were mowing down his harvest, — thus he stood,
Filling with awe the hearts of all around,
And causing a wild flight where'er he turned,
So that the bloody victory was won,
And great the booty which they made that day.
Giving the signal then to rest themselves

Now from their armèd dance, Walthari placed
A wreath of verdant oak-leaves on his head,
And all his men who saw it did the same.
And thus triumphantly they did return,
Each to his separate home, with gladsome heart.
And to Attila's palace Walter went,
Riding but slowly, like a weary man.
But when the servants saw him thus approach,
With eager, curious looks they hurried forth,
And seizing his good palfrey by the reins
They bade him welcome, offering their help
To rest him after all his past fatigues,
And putting questions to him about the war,
And if their arms were crowned with victory.
But scanty answers to these quests he made;
Then entering the hall he found Hiltgund,
Who blushing received his proffered kiss,
Then hurried off to fetch a cup of wine,
To still his thirst, after so much fatigue.
Long was the draught he took, for as the earth
Gladly absorbs the rain after long drought,
So did the wine refresh his parchèd tongue.
Then, clasping the fair maiden's hand in his,
For both knew well that they were long betrothed,
He thus spoke out before the blushing maid :—
“ Many a year has softly glided by,
Whilst in captivity we longed for home ;
For though the cage that holds us be of gold,
'T is still a cage, and ne'er can I forget
The ancient promise which made thee my bride
In times of freedom, ere the Huns had come.”
These words, like fiery arrows, found their way

Into the ears of Hiltgund, who, to try
The faith and truthfulness of him who spoke,
With tearful voice and flashing eye replied : —
“ How darest thou dissemble thy true thoughts?
For ne’er thy heart did feel what says thy mouth,
For thy proud heart is set on nobler game
Than the poor maiden whom thou mockest now.”
With steady eyes that gazed a half reproach,
The valiant hero thus his speech resumed : —
“ Far be deceit and falsehood from my lips,
Which never yet have uttered one false word,
And verily thou knowest I love thee well, —
And if I in thy woman’s soul could read
I fain would tell thee something secretly,
Whilst not a spying ear is listening near.”

Fully convinced of having wronged her knight,
Hiltgunde weeping fell upon her knees : —
“ Go where thou wilt and I will follow thee,
Through grief and dangers, until Death us part.”
With gentle words and loving arms he raised
The weeping maiden, saying all he knew
To comfort her, and then revealed his plans : —
“ My soul has long been weary of this yoke,
And filled with yearning for my fatherland ;
Yet never would I go without Hiltgund,
My own belovèd future wife and queen.”
And smiling through her tears, Hiltgund replied :
“ My lord, the words thou speakest I have borne,
For many years, a secret in my heart.
So let us fly then when and how thou wilt,
And our love will help us to surmount

All dangers that may in our path arise.”
Then further Walter whispered in her ear : —
“ And as they have intrusted thee with all
The keys unto their treasures, I would have
Thee lay aside the armor of the king,
His helmet and his sword, a masterpiece
Of foreign workmanship. Then go and fill
Two chests with gold and jewels to the brim,
So that thou scarce canst lift them off the ground.
Besides, four pair of well-made leathern shoes,
The way is long, — as many take for thee.
And from the blacksmith fetch some fishing-hooks,
So that the lakes and rivers which we pass
May yield us fish for our support and cheer.
All this a week from this let be prepared,
For then the king will hold a sumptuous feast,
And when the wine has sent them all to sleep,
We two will fly away to the far West ! ”

The hour for the feast had come at last,
And in the hall, bedecked with colors gay,
Attila on his throne, in purple clad,
Presided o'er the feast ; while round about,
On couches numberless, the others lay.
The tables scarce could bear the heavy load
Of all the dishes, pleasant to behold ;
While from the golden beakers issued forth
Enticing, fragrant scents of costly wines.
The meal had now begun. With zealous grace
Walthari on himself the duty took
To act as host, encouraging the guests
To do full honor to the goodly cheer.

And when at last their appetites were soothed,
And all the tables from the hall removed,
Walthari to the king these words addressed : —
“ And now my noble lord and king I beg
To give your gracious leave without delay
That the carousing to the meal succeed.”
Then, dropping on his knees, a mighty cup,
Richly adorned with many a picture rare,
He thus presented to the king, who said :
“ Indeed, my good cup-bearer, you mean well
By thus affording me the ample means
To drown my thirst in this great flood of wine ! ”
Then laughingly he raised it to his lips,
And drank and drank, until the giant cup
Was emptied to the dregs, and fairly stood
The nail-test, as no single drop would flow
When upside down the beaker then was turned.
“ Now, follow my example, all of you ! ”
The old carouser cried with cheerful voice.
And swifter almost than the chasèd deer
The cup-bearers now hurried through the hall,
Filling the cups as soon as they were quaffed,
Each trying in this tournament of wine
To get the better of his neighbors there.
Thus, in short space of time, many a tongue
That often uttered wise and prudent speech
Began to stammer, — until by degrees
The wine did conquer e'en the strongest men ;
So that when midnight came, it found them all
A prey to drunken and besotted sleep.

With soft and careful voice, Walthari now
Called to Hiltgund, and bidding her prepare,

Went to the stable then to fetch his horse,
Lion by name, his good and trusty steed,
That stood awaiting him, pawing the ground,
And with dilating nostrils bit the reins
As if impatient to display his strength.
Then on each side the treasure-laden chests
Were fastened carefully; some victuals, too,
Packed in a basket, had not been forgot.
First lifting up the maiden, in whose hands
The reins he placed, Walthari followed her,
His red-plumed helmet towering above
His massive armor, whose protective strength
Had stood the test of many fierce attacks.
On either side he wore a trusty sword,
Beside a Hunnic sabre, short but sharp;
And in his hands both shield and lance he held.
Thus, well prepared 'gainst any chance attack,
Walthari and his bride rode from the halls
Of Attila for ever — full of joy.
All through the long and darksome night they rode,
The maiden taking care to guide the steed
And watch the treasure, holding in her hand
The fishing-rod, as her companion had
Enough to do to carry all his arms.
But when the morning sun cast his first rays
Upon the slumbering earth, they left the track
Of the broad highway, turning to the shade
Of lonely woods; and if the wish for flight
Had not been stronger in the maiden's heart
Than fear, she fain would have shrunk back
Before the dangers which seemed lurking there
Behind each tree; and when a branch but moved,

Or when some hidden bird its voice did raise,
Her bosom heaved with half-suppressèd sighs.
But on they rode, having to find their way
Through pathless woods and lonely mountain-glens.

Yet still they slept, in that vast banquet hall,
Until the sun stood high up in the sky,
When Attila, the king, first did awake,
And raised his heavy head, clouded with wine ;
Then slowly rose, and stepping to the door,
Called out with drowsy voice : “ Ye men out there,
Go find Walthari, quick, and bring him here,
That he may cheer his king with sprightly talk,
Presenting him the welcome morning-cup ! ”
The servants to obey his order went
In all directions, looking here and there,
Yet nowhere was Walthari to be found.
With trembling gait Queen Ospirin now came,
And from afar was heard her scolding voice : —
“ What in the name of wonder ails Hiltgund,
That she forgets to bring my morning-gown ? ”

Then there arose a whisper 'mongst the men,
And soon the queen had guessed the fatal truth, —
That both their captives now had taken flight.
Loud was her grief with which she now exclaimed :
“ Oh, cursèd be the banquet, cursed the wine,
Which so much mischief in one night has wrought !
And yet I, who foresaw the coming doom,
Unheeded raised my warning voice in vain.

So now the strongest pillar of support
That propped the throne, Walthari too, is gone."

Fierce was the anger which beset the heart
Of Attila, who, tearing his gray locks
In his impotent rage, could find no words
In which to utter all that raged within.
During that day he neither ate nor drank,
In gloomy silence brooding o'er his loss;
Even at night his mind could find no rest,
For stubborn sleep refused to close his eyes.
So, tossing restlessly about, he lay
As if his blood were changed to liquid fire;
Then, madly starting up, he left his couch,
And pacing his dark chamber up and down,
His frantic grief in all his acts displayed.

But while in fruitless sorrow thus the night
Crept by with stealthy, slowly-measured tread,
Walthari with his lady-love rode on
In breathless silence through the Hunnic lands.
But when the rising dawn announced the day,
King Attila did call the eldest Huns
(Whose hoary heads were signs of ripened wit)
Around his throne, and then addressed them thus:--
"He that shall bring Walthari back to me,
That cunning fox who has deserted us,
Him I will clothe in costly golden robes,
And cover him with gifts from head to foot,
So that his very feet shall tread on gold."
'T was said in vain, for neither count nor knight
Nor page nor slave was found in all the land,

Who had the courage to pursue a man
Renowned for his valor and his strength,
Who never yet had found his match and peer,
Whose sword was ever crowned with victory.
Thus all the king could say, was said in vain,
And unavailing were both gold and speech.
Thus unpursued the lovers onward sped,
Travelling by night, and resting in the day
In shady nooks and sheltered mountain-glens,
Spending their time in catching birds and fish
To still their hunger and to drive away
All idle fancies from their hearts and heads,
So that in all this time the noble knight
Not once the maiden wanted to embrace.
Full fourteen times the sun had passed his round
Since they had left the halls of Attila,
When, in the evening light, between the trees
They saw a sheet of water flashing bright
And golden in the sunshine, and at last
They gave a joyous welcome to the Danube,
The noble river from whose vine-clad banks
The stately battlements and lofty towers
Of ancient Worms, Franconia's capital,
Rose proudly in the air. A ferry-man,
Who then was loitering beside his boat,
Rowed them across, and as a fee received
Some fish which in some river had been caught
On that same morning by Walthari's hook.
As soon as they had reached the other side,
Walthari spurred his charger to a quicker pace.
The boatman the next morning brought the fish
Unto the royal cook, who gladly took

The foreign ware ; which, daintily prepared,
He served that very day at the king's board.

Full of surprise King Gunther looked at them.
Then turning to his guests he said aloud : —
“ In all the time that in Franconia I
Have sat upon the throne, I ne'er have seen
A fish like these amongst the goodly fare
Upon my table ; therefore tell me quick,
My worthy cook, whence these fair fish have come ! ”
The cook denounced the boatman, who was fetched,
And to the questions put thus did reply : —
“ As I was sitting by the riverside,
Just as the sun was slowly gliding down
Behind the hills, the eve of yesterday,
A foreign rider in full armor came
Out from the woods, looking so proud and bold
As if he then and there came from the wars ;
And though his armor was not light, I trow,
He yet did spur his horse to hurry on,
As if by unseen enemies pursued.
Behind him, on the selfsame steed, a maid
Fair as the sun was seated, whose small hands
Did guide the animal, whose wondrous strength
I had full leisure to observe the while.
Besides this double freight of man and maid,
It bore two caskets, fastened to its sides,
Which, as it shook its archèd neck, gave forth
A ringing, clinking sound of precious gold.
This man I rowed across, and got the fish
Instead of copper payment from his hands.”

As soon as he had ended, Hagen cried : —
“ My friends, I bid ye all rejoice with me !
For surely 'tis my friend Walthari, who
Now from the Huns has like myself escaped.”
Loud were the shouts of joy which from all sides
Did greet this welcome news ; but full of greed
King Gunther, when the tumult had decreased,
With cunning speech the company addressed.
“ I also, my good friends, bid you rejoice
With me that I have lived to see the day
When the fair treasure which my father gave
Unto the Huns, — a kindly Providence
Has now sent back ; and never be it said
That I had failed to profit by my luck !”

Thus Gunther spoke, nor did he tarry long,
But, choosing from his knights twelve of the best,
He bade them mount and follow in this quest,
On which his heart and soul was madly fixed.
In vain did Hagen, faithful to his friend,
Bid him beware, and try to turn his thoughts
To better aims ; — his words did not avail ;
For avarice and lust of gold had made
Their fatal entrance into Gunther's heart.
So from the gates of Worms the well-armed troop
Rode onward, following Walthari's track.

Meanwhile Walthari and his gentle bride
Had entered a dark wood where mighty trees
Were giving shade and shelter from the heat.
Two rugged hills extended their steep peaks
In stern and gloomy grandeur heavenwards ;

A cool and sheltered ravine lay between,
Blocked up by narrow walls of sandy rocks
And cradled in a nest of trees and grass, —
A very den for robbers, hard to take ;
Which they no sooner spied than Walter said : —
“ Here let us rest, my love ! For many nights
My eyes have tasted neither rest nor sleep.”
Then, taking off his armor, he lay down,
Resting his head upon the maiden’s lap.
And further he continued : “ While I sleep,
My own belovèd, keep a careful look
Into the valley, and if but a cloud
Of dust were rising in the distance, mind
To wake me with a soft and gentle touch
Of thy dear fingers. Do not startle me
All of a sudden, even though a host
Of enemies were coming at a time.
I fully trust thy loving eyes,” — and thus
He closed his own and soon was fast asleep.

Meanwhile King Gunther’s greedy eye had spied
The footprints of a solitary horse,
And with exulting joy he cried aloud : —
“ Come on, my faithful vassals ! Ere the sun
Has sunk behind those hills, we shall have ta’en
Walthari with his stolen gold, I trow.”
His face o’ershadowed by a darkling cloud,
Prince Hagen said : “ Believe me, noble king,
That not so lightly you will vanquish him.
Oft did I see how valiant heroes fell,
Stretched to the ground by Walter’s goodly sword,
Which never missed its mark, nor found the man

Who was his match in all the warlike arts.”
Unheeded fell these words on Gunther’s ear,
And in the heat of noon they reached the glen
Which as a stronghold Nature had arrayed.

With wakeful eyes Hiltgunde kept her watch,
When suddenly she saw a cloud of dust
Rise in the distance, and could hear the tramp
Of swift-approaching horses. So she laid
Her lily fingers on Walthari’s hair
And whispered in his ear: “Awake, my love,
For I can see a troop of armèd men;
Their shields and lances glisten in the sun.”

And from his drowsy eyes he rubbed the sleep,
Then hastily he seized his sword and shield,
Put on the armor, and thus stood prepared
For bloody fight which was to follow soon.
But when Hiltgunde saw the knights approach,
She threw herself despairing on the ground,
And with a wailing voice she cried aloud: —
“Ah, woe is me! the Huns are coming here!
But rather than return a prisoner
A second time, — I prithee, my dear lord,
To kill me with thy sword; — so that if I
Shall never live to be thy wife, no man
Shall dare to make me his reluctant bride.”

With soothing words Walthari then replied: —
“Be calm, my own, and banish needless fear.
For He who was my help in former plight
Will not desert me in my sorest need.

These are no Huns, my darling ! Silly boys,
Not knowing what the danger they provoke,
In youthful wantonness of stubborn pride.”
Then with a merry laugh he cried aloud :
“ Forsooth, look yonder ; if I don’t mistake,
That man is Hagen, my alien friend ! ”

Then, stepping to the entrance of the gorge,
The hero boldly uttered this proud speech : —
“ I tell ye that not one Franconian man
Shall bring the tidings home unto his wife
That, living, he had touched Walthari’s gold,
And,” — but he did not end the haughty speech,
But falling on his knees he humbly asked
God’s pardon for his own presumptuousness.
Anon he rose, and letting his keen eye
Glance o’er the ranks of the approaching foes,
He said unto himself, “ Of all these men
There is but one of whom I am afraid,
And that is Hagen ; for I know his strength,
And that in cunning tricks there is no man
Can claim to be his equal, I believe.”
But while Walthari held himself prepared,
Sir Hagen once again did warn the king : —
“ If you would hear my council, I advise
To send some messenger and try to get
A peaceful issue ; for maybe that he
Himself is ready to give up the gold.
If not, there still is time to draw the sword.”

So Gamelo of Metz, a stalwart knight,
Was sent as herald to Walthari then.

And soon accosted him with this demand : —

“Tell me, O stranger knight, whence thou dost come,
What is thy name, and where thy home may be ?”

“First let me hear,” Walthari then replied,

“Who is the man whose orders to obey

“Thou camest hither ?” And with haughty mien

Sir Gamelo now said, “Franconia’s king,

Gunther by name, has sent me on this quest.”

Walthari then resumed : “What does it mean,

To stop and question peaceful travellers thus ?

Walthari is my name, of Aquitain,

Whence, as a hostage to King Attila,

I once was sent while I was yet a boy ;

And now, full tirèd of captivity,

I ’m turning back to liberty and home.”

“If that is so,” Sir Gamelo replied,

“I ’ve come to bid thee to deliver up

Thy golden treasure, with yon damsel fair,

And thy good steed, unto my lord and king ;

Who, under these conditions, will be pleased

To grant thee life and freedom unimpaired.”

With anger flashing from his dark-blue eyes

Walthari, when he heard this offer made,

Loudly exclaimed : “Think ye that I ’m a fool ?

How can thy king claim what is not his own,

Commanding me as if he were a god,

And I his wretched slave ? As yet my hands

Are free and without fetters ; yet, to prove

My courtesy unto thy royal lord,

I willingly now offer him herewith

A hundred bracelets of the purest gold.”
With this fair offer Gamelo returned,
And Hagen, when he heard it, eagerly
Said to the king : “ Oh, take what he will give,
Lest evil consequences should ensue.
A fearful dream which came to me last night
Does fill my soul with an unusual dread
Of coming ill. I dreamt, O gracious lord,
That we together hunted in the wood,
When suddenly a monstrous bear appeared,
Attacking you with such wild vehemence
That ere I yet could come to rescue you
The bear had torn the flesh up to the hip
Of your right leg ; and when with headlong haste
I raised the lance, it struck me with one paw,
And scratched my eye out.” But with proud disdain
The king replied, “ I now see verily
That, like thy father, much thou dost prefer
To fight with thy smooth tongue than with thy sword.”
With burning pain and anger Hagen heard
These bitter words of ill-deservèd blame.
Yet, keeping a calm outside, he replied : —
“ If that be your opinion, I ’ll refrain
From joining in this fight against my friend.”

So leading out his horse to a near hill,
He there sat down to watch the bloody game.
Then Gunther turned to Gamelo once more : —
“ Go then and tell him that we claim the whole.
And should he still refuse to give it up,
I trow that thou art brave and strong enough
To force and throw him with thy valiant sword.”

And eager to obey his king's demand,
Sir Gamelo rode out with joyous speed;
And from the distance yet he raised his voice
And cried: "Halloo, good friend, I bid thee haste,
And give the whole of thy fair treasure now
Into my hands for my good lord and king!"
Walthari heard but did not deign to speak;
So louder yet the knight, approaching him,
Repeated the same quest: "Out with thy gold!"
But now Walthari, losing patience too,
Cried out with angry voice: "Leave off thy noise!
One verily might think I were a thief,
Who from thy king had robbed the treasure here.
Say, did I come to you with hostile mind,
That thus you treat me like an outlawed man?
Did I burn houses? or destroy the lands?
Do other damage? — that you hunt me down
Like some obnoxious, hurtful beast of prey?
If then to pass your land one needs must pay,
I'll offer you the double now to still
The avarice and greed of your proud king."

But Gamelo with mocking tone replied: —
"Yet more than this I trust you'll offer us;
I'm weary now of talk, — so guard your life!"
And covering his arm with threefold shield,
He threw his lance, which would have struck the
mark,
If with a subtle movement Walter had
Not turned aside, so that it glided past,
Full harmless by to fasten in the ground.
"Look out, here comes the answer," — with these
words

Walthari hurled his spear, which pierced the shield
Of Gamelo, and to his hip did nail
The luckless hand which just had missed its aim.
The wounded knight then, letting go his shield,
With his remaining hand tried hard to wrench
The spear out of his side; but ere he could
Succeed in his endeavor, Walter's sword
Had stabbed him to the heart; — so down he sank,
Without a groan, into the bloody grass.

No sooner did his nephew, Scaramund,
Behold his uncle's fall, than loud he cried :
“ Leave him to me ! — for either I will die,
Or have revenge for my dear kinsman's blood ! ”
So on he galloped up the narrow path
That to Walthari's rocky fortress led.
Gnashing his teeth with inward fury that
Could find no other vent, he cried aloud : —
“ I have not come to fight for thy mean gold,
But I will have revenge for him who fell
Before my very eyes, — slain by thy hand.”
But with unruffled calm Walthari spoke : —
“ If mine the fault of that which caused the death
Of him thou call'st thy uncle, — may I fall
Pierced to the heart by thy own lance or sword ! ”

Scarce had he ended when, in hasty speed,
That worked its own destruction, Scaramund
Had thrown his lances both ; and one was caught
By Walter's shield, while, far beyond the mark,
The second in a mighty oak stuck fast.
With naked sword, in blind and furious wrath,

He then bore down upon his enemy,
To split his head with one resounding blow
Which made the sparks flash forth indignantly,
But could not pierce Walthari's cap of steel, —
A very masterpiece of workmanship.
Before the echo of this mighty blow
Had died away, Walthari's spear had thrown
The rider to the ground, and though he asked
For mercy, 't was too late ; for with one cut
His head was severed from his trunk, and thus
He shared the doom that he could not revenge,
And with his uncle shared an early grave.

“ Forwards ! ” was Gunther's cry, “ and don't desist
Before the worn-out man shall render up
Both life and gold ! ” — Then Werinhard rode forth
To try his chance against yon fearful man.
He was no friend of lances ; all his skill
Lay in his bow, and from the distance he
Sent many an arrow 'gainst his stalwart foe.
But he, well covered by his massive shield,
Took ample care not to expose himself ;
So that before Sir Werinhard came near
His quiver had been emptied all in vain ;
And full of anger at this first defeat
He now rushed forward with his naked sword.

“ And if my arrows are too light for thee,
Then let me see what this my sword will do ! ”
“ Long have I waited here impatiently
For thy approach,” Walthari made reply,
And like a flash of lightning his good spear

Flew through the air, the harbinger of death ;
Missing Sir Werinhard, it hit the horse,
Which rearing backwards in its agony
Threw off its rider, and then fell on him,
And ere Sir Werinhard could raise himself,
Walthari's hand had seized his yellow locks ;
Stern and relentlessly he did the same
For him as for the others, and his head
Fell to the ground where his companions lay.
But Gunther still was loath to quit the fight ;
So as fourth combatant came Ekkefried,
He who had slain the duke of Saxony,
And lived an outlaw since at Gunther's court.
Proudly he sat upon his red roan steed ;
And ere for serious fight he did prepare,
With taunting word and mocking speech he tried
To rouse Walthari from his outward calm : —
“ Say, art thou human, or some imp of hell,
Who with his magic tricks, by demons taught,
Has thrown and vanquished better men than he ?
But now, believe me, they will be avenged ! ”

But he with a contemptuous laugh replied : —
“ Forsooth I know the meaning of such stuff,
And am not frightened by thy idle boasts.
Come on, and I will teach thee my dark tricks,
And prove that I am master of my art ! ”

“ I will not keep thee waiting, — so beware ! ”
And with these words the Saxon Ekkefried
With dexterous hand his iron spear did throw,
Which striking 'gainst Walthari's shield was broke

To pieces like some wand of brittle glass.
And with another laugh Walthari cried : —
“ Take back thy present, and I warrant thee
Thou ’lt find the goblin knows to hit the mark ! ”

— A moment later and his fearful spear,
Cleaving the shield, had pierced unto the heart
Of Ekkefried, granting a speedy death.
And as his lawful prize Walthari led
His goodly horse away unto the spot
Where Hiltgund still was watching anxiously.
The fifth who came to undertake the fight,
Hadwart by name, had only brought his sword,
With which he hoped to kill this dreadful foe.
And to the king he said before he went : —
“ If this my sword should be victorious,
I prithee, let me have Walthari’s shield ! ”
Spurring his horse, he rode unto the spot
Where the dead corpses lay blocking the path ;
So, jumping to the ground, he cried aloud : —
“ Come out then from thy corner, thou sly rogue,
Who like a false envenomed snake dost lie
In ambush, hoping thus to save thy life,
Which I am come to take with my good sword.
And as thy dainty, many-colored shield
Will be my booty, I command thee now
To lay it down, lest it might damaged be.
And if it were decreed that I should fall,
Thou never wilt escape with thy base life,
As my companions will avenge my death. ”

With calm composure Walter thus replied : —
“ Indeed, I would not want my trusty shield,

Which more than once to-day has saved my life.
Without that shield, I should not now stand here.”
“Then wait and see me take it!” Hadwart cried, —
“Thy steed, and ay, thy rose-cheeked damsel too
Will soon be mine! Come out, then, my brave
sword!”

Then there began a fighting as the like
Had ne'er been seen before in yonder wood;
So that with wonder and amazement those
Franconians stood and lookèd on the while.
At last, to end the combat with one stroke,
Hadwart dealt such a blow as must have felled
Walthari to the ground, if with his spears
The blow he had not parried; and anon
He wrenched the weapon out of Hadwart's hand,
And threw it far away over his head.
In ignominious flight Sir Hadwart then
Tried hard to save his life; but Alpher's son,
With swifter feet, did follow on his heels.
“Stop yet a while! thou hast forgot thy shield!”
And with these words, he raised the iron lance,
And struck it through Sir Hadwart's corselet, so
That as he fell he pinned him to the ground.

The sixth who volunteered his chance to take
Was Hagen's nephew, young Sir Patavid.
On seeing him prepared to meet his doom,
His uncle, feeling pity for the lad,
With speech persuasive tried hard to turn
His daring fancy from this bold endeavor: —
“Oh, nephew, see how death is lurking there,

And do not waste your fresh and youthful life
Against yon man whom you will conquer not ! ”

But Patavid, not heeding this advice,
Fearlessly went, spurred by ambitious pride.
With mournful heart Sir Hagen sat apart,
And heaving a deep sigh he spoke these words : —
“ Oh, ever greedy youth ! oh, baneful thirst of gold,
I wish that hell would gather all her golden dross,
And set the dragons to watch over it,
Instead of tempting wretched human souls
Into perdition. There 's none has got enough,
And to gain more, they risk their very lives
And souls into the bargain. Wretched fools !
That dig and toil and scrape and do not see
That they are often digging their own grave,
Beside which Death stands grinning. Say, what
news

Shall I take back to greet thy mother's ears,
And thy poor wife who waits for thy return ? ”
And as he thought of her despairing grief,
A solitary tear would trickle down.
“ Farewell, farewell forever, nephew mine ! ”
He cried in broken accents, which the winds
Did carry off unto Walthari's ear,
Whose heart was touched by his old friend's com-
plaint,
And thus addressed the bold, though youthful knight :
“ I warn thee, my brave lad, to spare thy strength
For other deeds, and not to risk the fate
Of those who came before thee, stalwart knights, —
For I should grieve to lay thee by their side. ”

“ My death does not regard thee ; come and fight,
Forsooth, I did not come for idle talk,”
Was Patavid’s reply, and as he spoke
His whizzing spear came flying through the air.
But by Walthari’s own ’t was beaten off
With such a mighty stroke that e’en before the feet
Of fair Hildgund it fell, close by the cave.
A cry of fear escapèd from her lips.
Then, from her rock, she anxiously looked forth
To see whether her knight still kept the ground.
Another time he raised his warning voice,
Bidding his enemy desist from further fight ;
Who, heedless of these words, still forward pressed
With naked sword in hand, hoping to fell
Walthari with one strong and dexterous blow.
But he bent down his head so that the sword,
Not meeting with resistance, cut the air
And draggèd him who held it to the ground ;
And ere that he could rise, Walthari’s sword
Had dealt the death-blow with unsparing hand.

Quick to avenge his friend, Sir Gerwig now
Did spur his noble steed, which with one bound
Jumped o’er the bodies that blocked up the way.
And ere Walthari yet could free his sword
From his last foe, Sir Gerwig’s battle-axe
— The favorite weapon of Franconians then —
Flew through the air, a fearful sight to see.

Quicker than thought Walthari seized his shield
To guard himself, and with one backward bound
Took up his trusty lance, and, thus prepared,

Unflinching stood, awaiting the attack.
No single word was said on either side ;
Each thirsted for the fight with hungry soul, —
One to avenge the death of his dear friend,
The other to defend his life and gold
And her he valued more, far more than both.
Full long they fought with unrelenting zeal,
A well-matched pair, until Walthari's lance,
Lifting the shield of his antagonist,
Did find its way into his corsèlet ;
And with a hollow groan he reelèd back,
Expiring on the spot where he fell down.

With fear and wonder the Franconians saw
Walthari's prowess and their friend's defeat ;
So that at last they all besought the king
To cease from further fight : but he replied : —

“ Ah well indeed I never would have thought
To find such weak and craven-hearted men
Amongst my knights that I deemed brave before.
What ! does misfortune make your spirits fail,
Instead of raising them to boiling heat ?
And do you mean to say we should return
Conquered and beaten by one single man ?
Nay, if before I only wished to have
The stranger's gold, I now will have his life !
The blood which he has shed does cry for blood ! ”

He ceased, and at his words new courage filled
The hearts of his brave knights, so that now each
Would be the first to try the bloody game,

And in a file they now rode up the path.
Meanwhile Walthari there to cool his brow
Had ta'en his helmet off and hung it up
On the strong branch of a tall stately oak ;
And as the fragrant breezes cooled his brow
He felt new strength and vigor in his limbs.
But while he thus stood breathing the fresh air
Sir Randolf on his fiery steed advanced,
And came upon him with such sudden speed
That with his iron bar quite unawares
He would have pierced Walthari where he stood
If that the armor which did shield his breast
Had not been forged by Weland's dexterous hands
And thus resisted Randolf's fierce assault.
Not having time to don his cap of steel,
He seized his shield as Randolf raised his sword,
And dealt a cut, which, grazing Walter's head,
Cut off some locks of his abundant hair.
The second blow now struck against the edge
Of Walter's shield with such fierce vehemence
That it stuck fast, and, ere that he could wrench
It from this prison-hold, Walthari's hand
Had dragged him from the saddle to the ground :
" Ha ! " cried he, " thou shalt pay for my shorn locks
With thine own pate ! " and as he said the words,
Sir Randolf's head lay bleeding on the ground.

The ninth who now rode up in furious haste
Was Helmnod, bearing neither sword nor lance,
But on a long and twisted cord instead
A heavy trident set with many spikes.
And in the rear his friends held the one end

Of the strong rope, expecting, when the spikes
Had taken hold of Walter's shield, to drag
Him to the ground with their united force.
"Take care of thy bald head!" Sir Helmnod cried,
"For death is coming towards thee from above!"
And as he spoke, he threw the curious missile
With practised hands, — nor did he miss the aim.
Right in the middle of Walthari's shield
It fixed its iron claws, and a loud cry
Of joyous exultation filled the air
As this success was noted by the rest,
Who now, e'en aided by the king himself,
Pulled hard with all their might. — Yet 't was in vain;
For like some giant-oak he kept the ground
Until, wearied at last with such vain sport,
He suddenly let go his faithful shield.
So, trusting merely to his coat of mail
And his own sword, he madly rushed along,
And with one fearful blow he split the head
And neck of Helmnod through his cap of steel.
Before Sir Trogus yet could free himself
From the entangling rope that held him fast,
To fetch his arms which all had laid aside
Not to be cumbered as they pulled the rope, —
Walthari with one slash of his fierce sword
Had lamed him on both legs, and ta'en his shield,
Before Sir Trogus could stretch out his hand,
With which he now took up a mighty stone
And hurled it with such vigor through the air
That it did break his own strong shield in twain.
Then, crawling onwards through the sheltering grass,
Sir Trogus stealthily regained his sword,

Which joyfully he raised above his head.
His hero's heart still longed to die in fight,
And so he cried aloud: "Oh that a friend
Were near to help me, or my trusty shield
Had not been robbed! I tell thee, haughty knight,
Not thine own bravery, but want of chance
Has conquered me. Come on and take my sword!"
"Thy wish shall be fulfilled!" Walthari cried;
And quick as lightning he flew down the path,
Cut off the hand that vainly raised the sword,
So that it fell a useless member now
Unto the ground. But ere the final blow
Which was to end his soul's captivity
He yet had dealt, Sir Tannast galloped down
To help his friend in this dread hour of need.
Full angrily Walthari turned round,
And with a ghastly wound beneath his arm
Sir Tannast fell, bleeding beside his friend;
And murmuring, "Farewell, beloved maid!"
He breathed his last, and with a smile he died.
Full of despair, Sir Trogus raised his voice
To heap such bitter words and sharp insults
Upon Walthari's head that he, inflamed
With angry rage, to stop his sland'rous tongue —
Now throttled him with his own chain of gold.

When all his knights had thus been slain, the king
In bitter sorrow fled unto the spot
Where Hagen sat in gloomy solitude;
And, shedding scalding tears of rage and grief,
He tried to touch his heart with subtle speech,
And thus to rouse him from his apathy.

But cold as ice Sir Hagen made reply : —
“ Full well thou knowest, O king, that the pale blood
Which from my fathers I inherited,
Whose craven hearts would shrink with coward fear
When they but heard of war, does hinder me
To fight with yonder man. ’T is thy own speech
Which now does lame my arm. I cannot fight.”

Again the king tried to appease his wrath,
Humbling himself by asking pardon now,
And promising that if he would but fight,
He would reward him amply, ending thus : —
“ Indeed, I never shall survive the day
On which the burning shame will be revealed,
When in the streets and high-roads ’t will be said,
‘ One single man did kill a host of knights,
And there was none who would avenge the deed ! ’”

Still Hagen hesitated, thinking how
Walthari once had been his bosom-friend,
His brother almost ; but when now at last
His king and master fell upon his knees,
And with uplifted hands besought his help,
Then the ice melted which had bound his heart
In chains of pride and hatred, and he felt
That, if he still refused, his honor would
Forever be defiled, and so he spoke : —
“ Whate’er thou biddest me to do, my king,
It shall be done, and what no bribe on earth
Could have obtained, the faith I owe to thee
Has now accomplished ; but before I try
My sword and strength against my quondam friend,

I fain would find some way to drive him from
His present stronghold, which does make his strength.
For, while he keeps that place, 't is certain death
To come but near him. Ah, believe me, king,
That never, even to avenge the death
Of my fair nephew, would I raise my hand
Against my well-tried friend. Only for thee,
To save thee from the shame of this defeat,
I sacrifice my friendship. Let us hence,
So that, imagining that we were gone,
He too will ride away, suspecting naught ;
And in the open field, quite unprepared,
We will attack him, — and I warn thee that
The fight will not be easy, even so."

This cunning plan did please the king so well
That he embraced Sir Hagen on the spot,
And then they went away to hide themselves,
Leaving their horses grazing in the woods.
The sun had disappeared behind the hills,
And now our hero, wearied from the fight,
Stood there, revolving in his inmost heart
Whether 't were best to rest and pass the night
In his good stronghold, or to hurry on
And find his way out of this wilderness.
His soul misgave him when he saw the king
Kissing Sir Hagen with exulting mien.
Yet, after he had thought of this and that,
He made resolve 't were better to remain,
So that it were not said that he had fled,
Like some base criminal, at fall of night.
So, cutting down from the surrounding trees

And thorny brambles many a branch and bough,
He made himself a strong and solid hedge
To guard against an unforeseen attack.
With deep-drawn sighs he then walked to the spot
Where all the corpses lay his hand had felled,
And putting back each head unto its trunk,
He threw himself down on his knees and prayed:—
“ O Lord of hosts, whom all the world obeys,
Without whose holy will nothing is done,
I thank Thee that to-day Thou wert with me,
Helping me to defeat mine enemies,
Who thirsted all to drink my guiltless blood.
O Lord whose mighty word destroyeth sin,
Yet taketh pity on us sinners all,
I pray Thee now to show Thy mercy rare
On these my hand has slain, so that their souls
May enter all into Thy paradise,
And I may meet them there when my day comes.”

Thus Walter prayed; then, rising from the ground,
He went to fetch the horses of the dead,
And tied them all together with a cord
Made of some willow branches growing near.
Then, taking off his armor, he lay down
Upon his shield to rest his weary limbs;
And speaking tender words unto Hiltgund,
He bade her watch his slumbers as before,
For much he needed some refreshing sleep.
Thus all the night the fair and faithful maid
Sat by his side, driving the sleep away,
That tried to steal upon her unawares,
By softly singing little bits of song.

Before the dawn of day Walthari rose,
And telling her to sleep now in her turn,
He paced the ground with calm and even steps,
His lance in hand ready for an attack.
And thus the night wore on, and morning came;
A soft, refreshing mist fell down as dew,
Hanging in pearly drops on grass and trees.
Then from the corpses with all reverent care
Walthari took the armors, sword and all,
Leaving their costly dresses though, untouched.
Four of the chargers then were laden with
His rightful booty, whilst the other two
Were destined for himself and his fair bride.
Yet ere they started, mounting on a tree,
Walthari with his falcon-eyes surveyed
The scenery around; but seeing naught
Which might have roused suspicion, he resolved
To wait no more; and thus they now rode forth,
Hiltgunde, with the booty-laden steeds,
Riding ahead, whilst Walter closed the train.
Scarce were they gone when Hiltgund, looking back,
Beheld two stalwart knights approaching fast;
And paling with dismay she cried aloud:—
“Oh dear my lord! the end is coming now;
I pray thee fly, and save thy precious life!”

Turning his head, Walthari saw the foe,
And said with tranquil mien: “No man shall say
Walthari fled while he could wield the sword!
Here, take the reins of King Attila’s horse
And save the golden treasure. Yonder wood
Will give thee shelter, while I will accost

The strangers thus as it becomes a knight."
The maiden tremblingly obeyed his words,
While he prepared his trusty lance and shield.
Yet from a distance Gunther callèd out : —
“ Now thou no more canst hide between the rocks ;
Stand still and let us see whether the end
Will not reveal another countenance !
And whether fortune is thy hired maid ! ”

But with contemptuous mien Walthari turned
His head away as if he had not heard,
And looking full in Hagen's face, he said : —
“ Oh, Hagen, my old friend, what has occurred,
That as an enemy you come to me ?
Hast thou forgot the tears which thou hast shed
When lying in my arms for the last time, —
That thus thou treatest me, thy faithful friend ?
Indeed, I thought the day that we should meet
Would be a joyous one for thee and me,
And that with open arms and loving words
Thou wouldst accost me. Oh, how oft my heart
Would beat with restless longing when I thought
Of thee, so far away, yet still my friend !
Hast thou forgottèn then our boyish days,
When both did work and strive for one great aim ?
Then, when I looked into thine eyes, I felt
As if my parents and my home were near,
As if I were not quite forsaken yet.
And so I kept my love and faith for thee,
And, therefore, pray thee to depart in peace ;
And as a friendly gift I 'll fill thy shield
With gold and jewels even to the brim.

But with a sombre look and angry voice
Sir Hagen to this speech now made reply :—
“ Indeed, I think that thou didst break the faith
When by thy cruel sword my nephew fell ;
His life and not thy gold, I claim from thee,
And will hear naught of friendship past and gone.”

Thus speaking, he alighted from his horse,
As likewise did Walthari and the king ;
And so they stood prepared two against one.
Sir Hagen was the first to break the peace,
And with an able hand he threw the spear,
Which proudly pierced the air with hissing sound ;
But without deigning e'en to turn aside,
Walthari stood extending his good shield,
From which the lance rebounded with such force
As if its point had struck against a wall of stone.
Then Gunther threw his spear with good intent,
But with such feeble arm that it fell down,
Scarce having touched the rim of Walter's shield.
Their lances being gone, both drew the sword,
And with it levelled many a well-aimed blow,
Which all were parried by Walthari's lance.

At last an evil thought struck Gunther's mind,
And while Sir Hagen fiercely onward pressed
He stealthily bent down to seize his lance ;
But just when he had seized the oaken shaft,
Walthari, throwing bold Sir Hagen back,
Did place his foot on the coveted spear.
Full of dismay, the king stood there aghast,
Not moving hand or foot, so that his life

Was sore endangered, when Sir Hagen sprang
With deerlike swiftness forward, shielding him,
So that recovering by slow degrees
He once again could join in the attack,
That wagèd fiercer now than e'er before.
Yet still Walthari stood like some strong rock,
Unmoved and calm amidst the breakers' roar ;
But from his eyes shot forth such scathing looks,
And on his brow, in triple sisterhood,
Sat fury, hatred, and the fierce desire
To die or gain the bloody victory.
At last to Hagen he addressed these words : —
“ Oh, hawthorn tree,* I do not fear thy thorns !
And let thy vaunted strength be what it may,
I mean to wrestle with thee.” At these words,
He hurled his lance with such unerring aim
That part of Hagen's armor was torn off.
Then turning suddenly to Gunther he
With one astounding cut of his good sword
Did sever the right leg from Gunther's frame.
Half dead, King Gunther fell upon his shield ;
But when Walthari just had raised his arm
To deal the mortal blow, Sir Hagen saw
The peril of his king, and with one bound
He threw himself between, so that the sword
Fell on his helmet with a clashing sound,
And then was shivered into several bits.
With angry frown Walthari threw the hilt
Contemptuously aside, for though of gold,
What could it now avail him ? Then he raised
His iron-pointed lance with careless hand.

* The meaning of Hagen in German.

But ere he yet had poised it, Hagen's sword
Cut off the hand which to its enemies
Had been so fearful and so far renowned, —
And now lay helpless on the bloody ground.
Yet even then Walthari's noble heart
Thought not of flight, but pressing back his pain,
His left hand grasped the Hunnic scimitar,
Which still was left him in this hour of need,
And which avenged him, slashing Hagen's face
In such a fearful way that his right eye,
Besides six teeth, he lost by this one blow.
Then both did drop their arms, and thus at last
The bloody fight was ended. Both had shown
Their strength and valor in an equal way,
And now did part with knightly courtesy.

Then, sitting side by side, they staunched their wounds
With flowers, until Walter's ringing voice
Had brought the fair Hiltgund unto their side,
Who with her gentle hands then dressed the wounds.

As soon as this was done, Walthari said : —
“ Now sweet my love, I prithee go and bring
For each a cup of wine, for verily
I think we have deserved it all to-day.
First give the cup to Hagen, my old friend,
Who, like a faithful vassal to his king,
Has fought full valiantly in his behalf ;
Next give it me, and then the king may drink,
Who least has done, and therefore shall be last.”
The maiden, doing as her lord had said,
Stepped up to Hagen, who, though plagued with
thirst,

Refused to drink before Walthari's lips
Had been refreshèd by the cooling draught.
And when the pangs of thirst had thus been stilled,
The two, who just before had been dread foes,
Now sat together, holding friendly talk,
And jesting gayly as in days gone by.
"In future thou, my friend," Sir Hagen said,
"Must wear a leathern glove, well stuffed with wool,
On thy right arm, to make the world believe
Thou still hadst got both hands at thy commands,
And at thy right side thou must wear the sword ;
But worse than all, when thou wilt clasp thy bride,
With thy left arm thou must embrace her then.
In fact, all thou wilt do in future life
Must awkward be, — *left-handed*, as they say."
Briskly Walthari to this jest replied : —
"Oh, stop thy railing, poor and one-eyed man,
For with my left hand here I yet may kill
The boar and stag, which thou no more wilt eat ;
And in my fancy I can see thee look
On friends and foes and all the world awry !
But for the sake of our youthful days
And ancient friendship, I will counsel thee
To bid thy nurse make porridge and milk-soups
When thou com'st home, such as befit thy state
Of toothless incapacity for other food."

Thus they renewed the friendship of their youth,
And after having rested, laid the king,
Who suffered greatly, on his horse's back.
And then the two Franconians slowly rode
To Worms, from where the day before they came

In all the pride of their exulting hearts.
Meanwhile Walthari and his gentle bride
Went on to Aquitania, Walter's home,
Where they were both received with tears of joy
By his old father, who had long despaired
Of holding in his arms his son again,
Who soon was wedded to fair Hiltegund;
And when his father died, for thirty years
Walthari swayed the sceptre, loved by all.

Oh, much belovèd reader, if my song
Has been but roughly chanted, I implore
Thy kind forgiveness, — I did my best.
Praisèd be Jesus Christ! — So ends Walthari's song.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LAST ECHO AND END.

“So ends Walthari’s song.”

AND he sang bravely, our hermit Ekkehard; and his Waltharilied is a venerable monument of German intellect, — the first great epic out of the cycle of national heroic Sagas, which, in spite of the destroying rust of time, was bequeathed undamaged to later generations. To be sure, other notes were struck in it than those which the Epigones* hatch in their gilt-edged little volumes of poems. The spirit of a great heroic time breathes through it, — wild and almost awful, like the roaring of the tempest in the oak-forest. There is a mighty clashing and flashing of swords playing on split helmets and hollow shields, and as little is to be heard of sentimental love-flutings as of eloquent dissertations on God and the universe, and what not! Titanic battles and Titanic jests; old knighthood in all its simple sternness; true, honest, silent love, and genuine open-faced hatred, — these were the materials for Ekkehard’s epic; but for this very reason his work became grand and mighty, and stands at the portal of old German

* *Epigoni*, a term applied to the unworthy successors of Homer.

poetry, tall and strong, like one of those bronze-clad giants which the plastic art of later days liked to place as gate-keepers before the entrance of palaces.

And if the roughness of ancient modes of thought, often almost heathenish, have the same effect on any one as the rude blast on the sand dunes of the seashore, whereby a man in a dress-coat is apt to catch a cold, let it be remembered that the song was sung by one who had himself fought with the Huns, and that he wrote it hundreds of feet above the depths of the valley; his locks were waving in the wind that had swept over the glaciers of the Säntis, — his mantle a wolf-skin, his writing-table a cavern-ledge, a she-bear his first auditor.

It is a pity that the sportive sprites and goblins have long ago ceased to practise their merry art; otherwise it might not be amiss for many a writer of our day if suddenly invisible hands were to carry him away from his mahogany table to the green meadow of the Ebenalp; up to those heights where the "old man" in all his mountain-grandeur looks down into the poet's manuscript; where the chasms yawn, the thunder with its multitudinous echoes rolls through the ravines, and the golden-vulture, in proud, lonely circles, soars up to the rainbow. There a man must either compose something grand, pithy, and of large dimensions, or penitently fall on his knees, like the prodigal son, and before that magnificent Nature confess that he has sinned.

Our tale is drawing to its close.

Perhaps it would seem to you appropriate if Ekke-

hard, after completing his song, died a peaceful death. It would have been most touching to tell, in conclusion, how he had sat in front of his cavern, with his eyes on the Bodensee, his harp leaning against the rock, his parchment-roll in his hands, — and how his heart had broken! And a fine simile might have been added, — how the poet was consumed by the burning flames of his genius, like the torch which is burnt to ashes even while it gives its light; but this touching spectacle Ekkehard did not afford to posterity.

Genuine poetry makes a man fresh and healthy. And Ekkehard's cheeks had assumed a brighter color during his work, and he felt so well that he often stretched out his arm as if he were about to strike down a wolf or bear with one blow of his fist.

But when his Walthari had been happily led through all dangers and deathly wounds to the very end, — then he gave a shout of delight which made the stalactites of his cavern twinkle at one another in amazement. He tossed down to the goats in their stall a double quantity of fodder, and with some silver coins hired the goat-boy to descend to Sennwald in the Rhine valley and get a jug of red wine.

It was in those days just as it is now: —

*When the book is all complete,
The writer leaps with joyous feet !* 280

And so that evening he sat on the Ebenalp at the old herdsman's and drank his health; and he took the

Alpine horn from his neck, and mounted a rock, and blew a loud triumphant blast toward the lazy distant Hegau mountain crests, as if he wanted to call the duchess out on her balcony, and Praxedis also, and greet them with a laugh.

“If I were to come into the world a second time,” he said to his friend the Alpmeister, “and were to drop down from the sky just where I pleased, I believe that I would choose the Wildkirchlein, and no other spot.”

“You are not the first man who has been pleased with our residence,” answered the old man with a laugh. “When brother Gottshalk was still living, five Italian monks once came up to pay him a visit, and they brought with them some better wine than this from the Sennwald; and they stayed three days up here, and jumped and danced so as to make their cowls fly higher than their heads. ’T was only when they went down the mountain again that they composed their faces into proper solemnity, and one of them made a long speech to our goats.

“‘Ye good goats, don’t tell on us,’ said he, ‘for the abbot of Novalese had best not know how we were carried away by our high spirits.’

“But now, mountain-brother, I wish you to tell me one thing! What have you been doing these last days, sitting all bent over in your cavern? I have observed you drawing many hooks and runes on ass-skins: you have not been concocting any evil charms against our flocks or mountains, have you. Else —”

He gave him a threatening look.

“I have been writing a song,” said Ekkehard.

The herdsman shook his head.

“Writing! writing,” he growled. “That does not concern me, and if God so wills, the high Sântis will still look down on our grandchildren and great-grandchildren without their knowing how to handle pen or pencil; for writing cannot possibly do any good. Man, if he wants to be in God’s likeness, must walk upright; while he who writes must sit down with a crooked back. Is not that just the contrary of how God would have it? So it must come from the Devil. Look out, mountain-brother, and if ever I find you cowering down like a marmot in your cavern, and writing, — by thunder! I will exercise my powers as Alpmeister, and tear up your parchment-leaves into little bits, so that the wind will scatter them among the fir-trees! Up here everything has to be orderly and simple; we will have nothing to do with new-fangled things!”

“I will not do it again,” said Ekkehard, laughing and holding out his hand.

The brave Alpmeister had grown warm over the red Sennwald wine.

“Bei Donner und Blitz!” he went on scolding. “What do you mean, ‘writing down a song’? ’T is mere foolery! There! try and write that down, if you can.”

He struck up a jodel, in such rough, unmodulated sounds that even the most practised ear would have found it difficult to discover a note which could be rendered by word or writing.

At the same hour, in a vine-clad summer-house of the bishop's garden at Passau on the Danube, a man in the first bloom of manhood was sitting before a stone table. An indescribable subtle expression played round his lips, half hidden by an ample brown beard; an abundance of curly locks fell down from under his velvet cap; his dark eyes followed the characters which his right hand was tracing. Two fair-haired boys were standing beside his armchair, curiously peeping over his shoulder. Many a parchment-leaf was already covered with the recital of tempests and battles, and the deaths of valiant heroes, — and he was now approaching the end. And before long he laid aside his pen, and took a long, deep, solemn draught of Hungarian wine out of a pointed goblet.

“Is it done now?” asked one of the boys.

“It is finished,” said the writer, “all finished, — how it began, and how it came, and how it ended with bitter shame!”

He held out the manuscript to him, and the boys ran away in jubilant glee to their uncle, Bishop Pilgerim, and showed it to him.

“And thou art in it also, dear uncle,” they cried.

The Bishop with his niece to Passau rode.

“Thou art in it twice, — and here again the third time!”

Pilgerim the bishop then stroked his white beard and said: —

“Ye may well rejoice, my dear nephews, that Konrad has written down this tale for you; and if the

Danube current streamed with gold for three days and three nights, ye might not fish up anything more precious than that song; it is the greatest history the world ever saw."

But the poet stood with radiant face under the vine-leaves and twining woodbine in the garden, and gazed at the withered red leaves which autumn had shaken from the trees; and he gazed down into the flowing Danube, and in his right ear he heard a loud ringing sound, — for at that very moment Ekkehard on the jocund mountain height had filled a wooden cup with wine, and spoken thus to the old herdsman:

"I once had a good comrade; a better one can not be found in any king's land, and his name is Konrad. Woman's love and worldly ambition are naught to me; but to old friendship I shall ever remain grateful unto my last dying day. So you must drink his health with me; he is a man who, if he were here, would please the old Sântis well."

And the herdsman had emptied the cup and had said, "Mountain-brother, I believe you. Long life to him!"

Therefore the man at Passau had felt his ear tingling, but he knew not the reason thereof. And his ear was still ringing when Bishop Pilgerim came toward him, and on his heels came a groom leading a little white steed, which was old and shabby; and when one looked closer at its face, it was blind in the left eye. And the bishop nodded his pointed mitre and graciously said:—

"Master Konrad, what you have written to please my nephews shall not be without its reward. My tried battle-horse is yours!"

A faint, melancholy smile played round Master Konrad's finely cut lips, and he thought: —

“Well, it serves me but right. Why did I become a poet!”

But aloud he said: —

“May God reward you, Sir Bishop! I hope that you will grant me a few days' leave of absence to rest myself from my work.”

And he caressed the old white horse, and mounted it without waiting for the answer, and he sat proudly and gracefully in the saddle, and even persuaded his humble charger to fall into a tolerable canter, and away he rode.

“I will wager my best falcon against a pair of turtle-doves,” said the elder of the two boys, “if he is not again riding to Bechelaren to the Margrave's castle. He has said many a time, ‘Quite as well as I can bring my gracious master the bishop into the song, I can also in it erect a memorial to the Margravine Gotelinde and her fair daughter. They after all will appreciate it most.’”

Meanwhile, Master Konrad had already passed out of the gate of the bishop's town. He gazed longingly down the Danube, and began to sing in a ringing voice: —

Then up and spoke the minstrel, his voice was clear and bold:—
“Oh, margrave, noble margrave, God's blessing manifold
Has fallen to thy share on earth since He gave thee a wife
So wondrous fair, and everywhere a most delightful life;
And if I were a monarch, and if a crown I wore,
Your lovely daughter would I wed, for her do I adore,
She is so beautiful to see, so winsome . . .”

. . . but when he had got so far, a cloud of dust was blown right into his face, so that involuntary tears started into his eyes, and his singing stopped.

The lines were out of the work for which the bishop had just now rewarded him. It was an epic in the German tongue, and was called, *Das Nibelungenlied*, "The Song of the Nibelungen!" ²⁸¹

Gradually the autumn came. And although it paints on the arch of heaven a more brilliant evening-red than any other season of the year, it is also accompanied by cold winds, so that the settlers on the Alps get ready to go down into the valleys, and no wolf-skin then can prevent a man's teeth from chattering.

Fresh snow was glistening on all the peaks around, and evidently had no intention of melting again that year. Ekkehard had preached his last sermon to the herdsmen. After it *Benedicta* sauntered past him.

"Now it's all over with our merry-making up here," said she, "for to-morrow man and beast go into winter quarters. Where are you going, mountain-brother?"

The question fell heavily on his heart.

"I should like best to remain here," said he.

Benedicta laughed merrily. "One can see," said she, "that you have not spent a winter up here; else you would not wish for another. I should like to see you snowed up in your little parsonage, with the cold creeping in at every chink and crevice, so as to make you tremble like an aspen leaf, and the

avalanches thundering down round about you, and the icicles growing right into your very mouth. . . . And when you attempt to go down into the valley to get provisions, then the snow, as high as a house, on the path; one step, and you sink up to the knees, — a second — traladibidibidib! and the hood is all that is left, and nothing more is seen of you than of a fly that has fallen into a pan of milk. Besides, we have had so many great tit-mice this year, — that means a severe winter, Hu! — how I enjoy the long winter evenings! Then we sit around the warm stove and spin by the light of the pine-knots. The wheels buzz, the fire crackles, and we relate the most beautiful stories, and all good boys may come and listen. 'T is a pity that you have not become a herdsman, mountain-brother; I would take you also with me to our spinning-room."

"It is a pity," said Ekkehard.

The next morning they went down the mountain in gay procession. The old herdsman had put on his finest linen, and looked like some jolly old patriarch. With a round leathern cap on, and the handsomest milk-pail over his left shoulder, he walked at the head, singing the "*ranz des vaches*" in a clear fresh voice. Then came *Benedicta's* goats, — the skirmishers of the great army; their keeper amongst them, wearing in her dark locks the last Alpine rose-leaves, already yellow.

Then came the big black-spotted *Susanna*, the queen of the herd, wearing the heavy bell round her neck in sign of her high rank. Dignified and proud was her gait, and whenever one of the others ven-

tured to outstrip her, she gave her such a contemptuous and threatening look that the presumptuous cow instantly fell back. Slowly and heavily the rest of the herd marched down the mountain.

“Farewell, thou dainty Alpine grass,” was probably the thought of many a plump heifer, as it cropped a stray flower here and there along the way-side.

The bull carried the one-legged milking-stool between his horns, and on his huge back sat the goat-boy, with his face to the tail, holding up the outstretched fingers of both his hands to his not over-delicately-formed nose, and shouting up to the mountain-peaks : —

*The summer is departed,
The winter now is nigh ;
Now let us bid each other
Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye !
Ye silent snow-clad fellows, —
A sweet farewell to you,
And may you have sound slumbers
The long, long winter through !*

A sledge, with the simple furniture and kitchen utensils, closed the train.

And herdsmen and flocks and goats disappeared in the fir-wood below ; their joyous songs and the merry tinkle of the cow-bells died away in the distance ; and then it became silent and lonely, as on that evening when Ekkehard had first knelt before the cross of the Wildkirchlein.

He entered his hermitage. During his solitary life in the mountains it had become clear to him that solitude is only a school for life, and not *life*

itself; and that he who in this stern world gives up to indolent self-contemplation must in the end become a useless being.

“There’s no help for it,” said he; “I too must return to the valley! The snow blows too cold, and I am too young; I cannot remain a hermit.”

*Farewell, thou mighty Säntis,
My guardian good and true,
Farewell, ye verdant pastures, —
I owe my health to you.
I thank thee for thy bounty,
Thou holy solitude;
Past is the old, old sorrow,
Past the despairing mood;
My heart is filled with rapture,
Bright hopes within it burn,
With longing for new conflicts
Toward the world I turn.
The youth lay idly dreaming:
Then came the gloomy night;
But in the mountain breezes
The man woke in his might!*

He seized his knapsack, and put in it his scanty belongings. His most precious thing, the Waltharí-líed, carefully wrapped up, he placed on the top. A smile played round his lips as he looked about on the few things which he left behind. On the ledge stood the half empty ink-bottle: he took it and threw it down the abyss, where it broke into glittering fragments. The three-cornered harp was leaning dejectedly against the wall outside.

“Thou shalt remain here and sweeten the lonely hours of my successor,” said he. “But mind not to

give forth weak, insipid sounds; else it were better that the water should drop down from the crevices on thy strings, and rust them, and that the winds from the glaciers should blow and break them.

“I have sung my song!”

He hung the harp on a nail.

During his hermit's life, he had carved for himself a strong bow, — quiver and arrows were still left from Gottshalk's legacy. These he took as suitable weapons. All armed, with his wolf-skin mantle over his shoulders, he stood before his hermitage, and cast a long, long look at the scenes where happy summer days had been spent, — up at his beloved mountain peaks, and down into the depth where the seagreen Seealpsee peeped forth from between the dark fir-trees. It was all as beautiful as ever.

The wood-pecker which had chosen a crevice of the same crag for its shelter confidently flew down on his shoulder and pecked his cheek with hammering bill; then, spreading its black and red plumage, it flew up into the blue air as if it wanted to tell the Söntis that the hermit was going away.

But Ekkehard thrust his spear into the ground and strode down the well-known giddy path. When he had reached the precipice on the Aesher, he stopped once more, and waved his hand to his hermitage, and broke out into a jodel that rang along the Kamor and the Hohenkasten, and reverberated back from the Maarwiese, until it was lost in the farthest ravines of the mountains.

“*He* can do it well,” said a homeward-wending herdsman in the valley to his comrade.

“Almost like a goat-boy!” said the other, as Ekkehard was just disappearing behind a rocky wall.

The rising sun had already been for some time casting his rays on the Wildkirchlein, which, like a deserted nest, seemed to look mournfully into the valley below.

Around the Bodensee people were preparing for the coming vintage. One fine evening Frau Hadwig was sitting in her castle garden, with the faithful Praxedis by her side. The Greek girl had disagreeable times now. Her mistress was out of tune, discontented, unapproachable. Even that day she could not be enticed into a conversation. It was a day of sad recollections.

“It is just a year ago to-day,” Praxedis began, with seeming carelessness, “since we sailed over the Bodensee, and paid a visit to St. Gallus.”

The duchess made no reply.

“A great deal has happened since then,” Praxedis was going to add, but the words died on her lips.

“And have you heard, gracious mistress, what people are saying of Ekkehard?” resumed she, after a considerable pause.

Frau Hadwig looked up. Her lips twitched.

“What are people saying?” she asked indifferently.

“Herr Spazzo has lately met the abbot of Reichenau,” pursued Praxedis, “who said: ‘The Alps have been highly favored, for the walls of the Säntis resound with the sound of the lyre and poetical twitterings; for a new Homer has built his nest

up there, and if he only knew in which cave the muses are living, he might lead their dance like the Cynthian Apollo." ²⁸² And when Herr Spazzo, shaking his head, replied, 'What is that to me?' the abbot said: 'It is your Ekkehard. This news has reached us from the monastery-school at St. Gall.' Herr Spazzo then rejoined laughingly, 'How can a man sing who can not even tell a story?'"

The duchess had risen. "Be silent," said she; "I will hear nothing more about it."

Praxedis understood the wave of her hand, and sorrowfully went away.

Frau Hadwig's heart, however, felt differently from what her tongue uttered. She stepped up to the garden-wall, and looked over towards the Helvetian mountains. Twilight had set in, and long heavy steel-gray clouds stood motionless, as if fastened there, over the evening-red that glowed and trembled beneath them.

In looking at the flowing and the waning of the sunset splendor, her heart was softened also. Her eyes were riveted on the Säntis, and it seemed to her that she saw a vision: that the heavens opened, and its angels came flying through the air and descending to those heights, wherefrom they lifted up a man in the well-known habit of a monk; and the man was pale and dead, and an aureole of light, clear and beautiful, surrounded the airy procession. . .

But Ekkehard was not dead.

A low whizzing sound startled the duchess. Her eyes glided over the rocky crag down which the

prisoner had formerly made his escape; a dark figure disappeared in the shade, an arrow came flying over her head and dropped slowly at her feet.

She picked up the curious missile. No hostile hand had sent it from the bow. Thin parchment-leaves were rolled round the shaft; the point was covered with meadow-flowers. She untied the leaves, and recognized the handwriting.

It was the Waltharilied.

On the first page was written, in pale red ink :

“A parting salutation for the duchess of Suabia !”

And beside it the words of the apostle James :
*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.**

Then the proud woman bent her head, and wept bitterly.

Here our story ends.

Ekkehard went out into the wide world, and never saw the Hohentwiel again. Neither did he return to the monastery of St. Gall. When he descended from the Alps and approached the well-known walls, he did indeed reflect whether he should not enter it again as a penitent; but an adage of the old Alpmeister occurred to him :—

“When one has long been herdsman, he does not like to become a goat-boy again.”

And he passed by.

Later, at the court of the Saxon emperors, a good deal was said about a certain Ekkehard, who was a proud, strong-willed, and self-centred man, who to

* James i. 12.

great piety united great contempt for the world,— but who was full of lively spirit, active, and well-versed in all the arts. He became the emperor's chancellor, and tutor of his young son; and his counsel was of great influence in all the affairs of the realm. "In short," writes one historian of him, "he rose to so much honor that there was a rumor prevalent that the highest dignity of the church was awaiting him."

The Empress Adelheid also held him in great esteem.²⁸³ He was one of the chief promoters of the warlike expedition sent out against the overbearing Danish King Knut.

It is not known whether this was the same Ekkehard of our story.

Others have maintained that there were several monks of the name of Ekkehard in the monastery of St. Gall, and that he who instructed the Duchess Hadwig in Latin was not the same who had composed the *Waltharilied*.

But those who have attentively read the story which we have now happily brought to a conclusion, know better.

About the fate of the others whom our tale has brought in variegated forms before the reader's eye, there is not much left to be told.

The Duchess Hadwig never married again; and in her pious widowhood reached a considerable age. Later she founded a humble little convent on the Hohentwiel, and endowed it with her territories in the Alemannian lands.

It was never permissible to mention Ekkehard's

name before her; but the *Waltharilied* was read by her very often, and became her constant consolation. According to an unauthenticated assertion of the monks of Reichenau, she must have known it almost by heart.

Praxedis faithfully served her mistress for some years more; but by degrees an irresistible longing for her bright sunny home took possession of her, so that she declared that she could not bear the Suabian air any longer.

The duchess loaded her with gifts and let her go from her. Herr Spazzo the chamberlain gave her a gallant and honorable escort as far as Venetia, from whence a Greek galley bore the still pretty maiden from the city of St. Mark to Byzantium. The accounts which she gave there of the Bodensee, and the rough but faithful barbarian people ²⁸⁴ on its shores, were received by all the waiting-women at the Greek court with a dubious shake of the head, as if she were speaking of a bewitched sea and some fabulous country.

Old Moengal for some time longer took care of the spiritual welfare of his parishioners. When the Huns threatened the land with another invasion, he spent much time in making plans for their reception. He proposed to dig some hundreds of deep pit-falls in the plain, to cover them with boughs and ferns, and behind them, in full battle-array, to wait for the enemy; so that horses and riders should thus be hurled headlong to destruction.

The evil guests, however, did not let themselves be seen again in the Hegau, and thus robbed the parish

priest of the pleasure of splitting their skulls with the mighty blows of his shillelah. A peaceful death overtook the old sportsman, just when he was about to rest himself after a successful falcon-hunt.

On his grave, in the shadow of his gray parish-church, there sprung up a holly-bush, which grew higher and more knotty than any which had ever been seen in those parts; and people said that it must be an offspring of their priest's good shillelah Cambutta.

Audifax the goat-herd learned the goldsmith's art, and went across to Constance, where he settled down in the bishop's domain and produced many fine works. The companion of his adventures accompanied him as his wedded spouse, and the duchess was god-mother to their first little son.

Burkard the monastery-pupil became a celebrated abbot of the monastery of St. Gallus,²⁸⁵ and on all solemn occasions he still manufactured dozens of learned Latin verses, from which, however, — thanks to the destroying powers of time, — posterity has been spared.

. . . And all have long since become dust and ashes. Centuries have passed in swift procession over the places where their fates were fulfilled, and new stories have driven the old ones from remembrance.

The Hohentwiel has since then had many experiences both of war and of peace. Many a knight rode out of its gates to gallant combat, and many a prisoner pined in its vaults, — until the last hour of the proud fortress struck; and on a fine day in May,

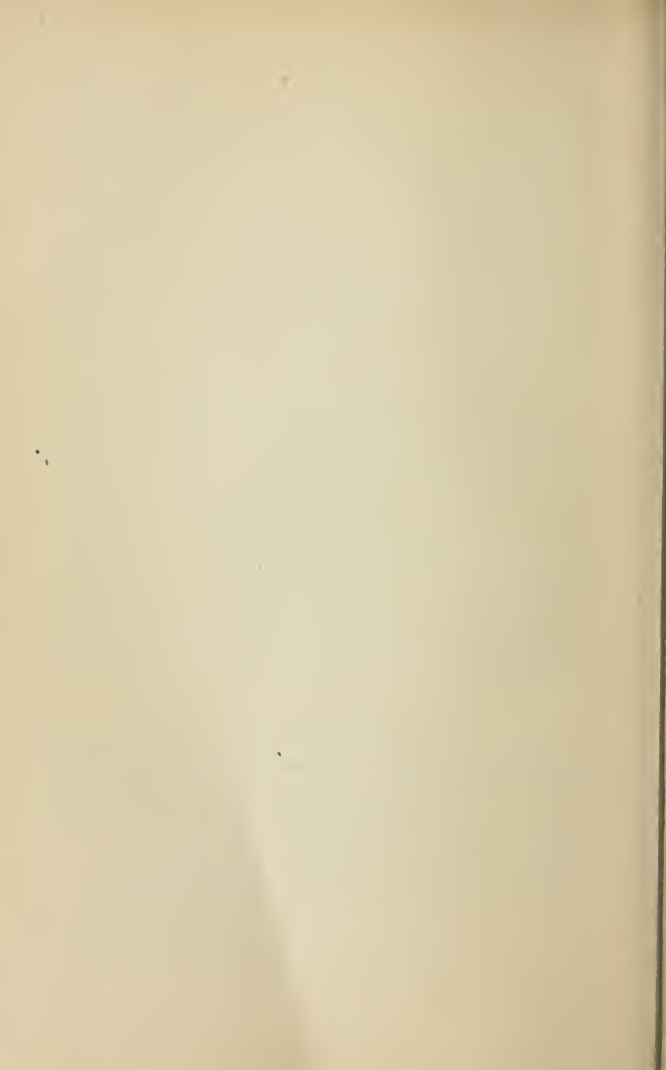
the very bowels of the mountain exploded, and towers and walls, blown to pieces by the enemy, were scattered into the air.

At the present day 't is quiet enough on that summit. The goats graze peacefully between the huge fragments; but from over the glittering Bodensee the Säntis still stands out in the blue distance, as grand and beautiful as it did so many hundred years ago; and it is still a pleasurable thing to lie on the luxuriant grass and look over the broad land.

He who has written this book has sat up there on many a spring evening, a strange and lonely guest; and the crows and jackdaws flew tauntingly around him, as if they wanted to mock him because he was so lonely; and they did not notice that a numerous and honorable party was assembled around him. For among the ruined walls stood the forms of those whose acquaintance the reader has made in the course of our story, and they told him every thing, clearly and distinctly, and they kindly encouraged him to write it down, and so help them to live again in the memory of a later, railway-hurrying Present.

And if he has succeeded in calling up before you also, beloved reader, who have patiently followed him till now, a distinct picture of that distant, bygone time, then he considers himself well paid for his trouble and some head-ache.

Farewell! and be his friend also in the future!



NOTES.

189. Page 6. See Bernhard Bader, "Volksagen aus dem Lande Baden," p. 34.

190. Page 21. The remarkable palisade with which the Hungarians, at the time of Charlemagne, had enclosed their borders, is described by the monk of S. Gall in accordance with the account of one who had seen it. "Gesta Karoli," Lib. I., in Pertz, "Monum." II. 748.

191. Page 21. . . . *iam mitius agendum inter Teutones!*

192. Page 25. *nam et villani quidam prædocti ollas, prunas in proximo monte paratas habentes, tumulto audito faces accensas levabant, et, ut discretionem sociorum et hostium nossent, quasi perlustrium fecerant.* The clear description of this attack on the Hungarian camp in the Frickthal, by the old Irminger and his six sons, with their vassals, is given by Ekkehard IV. in his "Casus S. Galli," c. 3, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 110. In the light of the beacons flaming on all the mountains round, they made an onslaught in three divisions on the unsuspecting foe. Those who did not escape by boldly swimming the Rhine were slain; Irminger devoted the booty that he got from the victory to the Cathedral of S. Fridolin at Säckingén. On hearing the news of this battle, a band of Hungarians who had camped on the right bank of the Rhine made their way over to Elsass.

193. Page 26.

"*Mir wird so kühl im Harnisch,*" sprach der Fiedelmann,
 "Drum glaub' ich dass der Morgen ziehet wohl heran,
 Ich spür' es an der Kühle, es wird wohl balde Tag . . .

"*My armor seems to me so cool,*" remarked the bard,
 "I think the morning even now is on its way,
 I feel it by the coolness: I know 't will soon be day.

"Nibelungenlied," *Avent.* 31.

194. Page 26. . . . It is a terrible spectacle. This fall is in our times called "*am Lauffen*" — [Rips?] The water falls so precipitately that it becomes all foam [*zu ein gantzen schaum*], and the spray rises like white steam. No boat can sail down over it without being dashed to pieces. And no fish can ever mount the height of this cataract, even if they had such long, curved teeth [*wann sie schon so lange krumme zeen hätten*] as that called *Mörthier Rosmarus*, or *Mors*. Sebastian Münster, "Cosmographie," 1574, p. 551.

195. Page 31. *Sahspach, Hadewigæ beneficii villa*. See Ekkeh. IV. "Casus S. Galli," c. 10, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 135.

196. Page 32. Maledictions against possible adversaries were regularly engrossed on all documents appertaining to deeds of gift, property transference, pious bequests, and the like. There was great originality and variety in the multifarious forms employed. For example, in the deed of foundation of the Monastery of Peterlingen, it says: "May his body during his mortal life suffer in anticipation the pangs of eternal hell, like Heliodorus whom the angels scourged, like Antiochus who was eaten by worms." In another place it stands written: "Whoever reads this document with unfriendly mind, may he be stricken with blindness." See Joh. v. Müller, "Geschichte der Schweiz," I. 253. An epoch

which had such a wide command of formulas for use in blessing, necessarily had also a great abundance of curses.

197. Page 34. . . . *et multi illorum comprehensi sunt cum rege eorum nomine Pulszi et suspensi sunt in patibulis.* "Annales S. Gallenses Maior.," *ad ann.* 955, in Pertz, "Monum." I. 79.

198. Page 36. *qui dubitans minime, huic illam nubere posse.* "Ruodlieb," *fr.* XVI. v. 15.

199. Page 37.

*Mich macht ein kleines Hälmmchen froh:
Es sagt, mir soll Gnade kommen;
Ich mass dasselbe kleine Stroh,
Wie ich 's bei Kindern wahrgenommen.
Nun höret all und merkt, ob sie es thu':
Sie thut, thut's nicht, sie thut, thut's nicht, sie thut!
Wie oft ich mass, stets war das Ende gut.*

Herr Walter von der Vogelweide (translated in Simrock, "Altdeutsches Lesebuch," 1854, p. 208).

*A little flower-stalk makes me glad:
Its word of hope I treasure;
For as I've seen the children do,
This little straw I measure.
Now hear and mark what it tells to you:
It goes, goes not, it goes, goes not, it goes —
And every time I try good luck it shows!*

200. Page 39. . . . *corda hominum quos capiunt particulatim dividentes veluti pro remedio devorant.* Regino: "Chronicon *ad ann.* 889," in Pertz, "Monum." I. 600.

201. Page 41. . . . *Der ist sâlic der dri behûttet sîne gewate daz er nihet naccetne gange,* etc. Sermon quoted by I. von Arx from a parchment leaf of the XIth Cent. and published with corrections in Hattemer, "Denkmale," etc., I. 326.

202. Page 43. See Grimm, "Rechtsaltertümer," p. 723, *s. v.* "Dachabdeckung."

203. Page 44. *Ungar baptizatus uxorem duxit, filios genuit.* Ekkeh. IV. "Casus S. Galli," c. 3.

204. Page 48. Rüdiger Manesses "Sammlung," I. 87.

205. Page 54. See Grimm, "Rechtsaltertümer," p. 726, *s. v.* Prellen.

206. Page 56. See "Lex Ripuariorum," c. 57. The person thus freed was called *homo denariatus*.

207. Page 57. See Ekkeh. IV. "Casus S. Galli," c. 10, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 135.

208. Page 61. Though we have no expectation that any of our readers will feel tempted to consult Gunzo's pompous work, still it is only right to indicate the place where it may be found. It is put by the learned Benedictines Martène and Durand in their "Collectio Veterum Scriptor. et Monumentor." tom. I. 294, as *Epistola Gunzonis ad Augienses fratres*; — an historic proof that even before Ehren-Götze, and all who at the present time, complacently smiling, enter upon the pathway of learned abuse, there were plucky men. Similar performances Baronius had in mind when he called the Xth Century *bleiernes* — leaden. Professional criticism characterizes the style of some of Gunzo's contemporaries and sympathizers as a Latin "the foundation-color of which is not hidden by the classical flourishes, filigrees, and arabesques ornamenting it, and in which they succeed in repeating only strange thoughts, if, indeed, they have any thought at all." See Vogel, "Ratherius von Verona," I. 161.

209. Page 72. "Regula S. Benedicti," c. 43. *de his qui ad mensam tarde occurrunt.*

210. Page 75. The Biography of S. Gallus (Lib. II. c. 34, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 29) mentions the custom of

compelling those who had committed involuntary manslaughter to go on a pilgrimage loaded with heavy chains, often welded from the instrument of death, or with iron rings around the body, or with weights on the arms. See, also, Uhland's beautiful poem, "der Waller," — the Pilgrim.

211. Page 79. "Lex Burgundionum," tit. XVII. 1.

212. Page 85. See "Vita S. Liobæ," in Mabillon, "Acta Benedict." sæc. 3, pars 2, 229 (ed. Venet. 1734).

213. Page 88. . . . *plerosque autem vidimus et audivimus tanta dementia obrutos, tanta stultitia alienatos, ut credant et dicant, quandam esse regionem, quæ dicatur Magonia, ex qua naves veniant in nubibus, in quibus fruges, quæ grandinibus decidunt et tempestatibus pereunt, vehantur in eandem regionem, ipsis videlicet nautis aëreis dantibus pretia Tempestariis et accipientibus frumenta vel ceteras fruges.* Agobard., "Contra insulsam vulgi opinionem de grandine et tonitruis," I. 146 (ed. Baluze).

214. Page 90. The belief is prevalent among all peoples that in a concise rhyme, solemnly composed, lies a latent magic power which may be turned to suit circumstances, either as a curse or as a blessing. From the enigmatical Romano-Sabine charm against sprains, quoted by the elder Cato ("De Re Rustica," 160), from the northern runes, from the genuine, honest, Merseburg medicinal rhymes, down to the incomprehensible gibberish which, at the present day, the country horse-doctor mutters over the rabid dog or the scabby sheep, when no regular veterinary is at hand, and there is no danger of any officious personage entering a complaint, — there is everywhere the same fundamental thought as to the efficacy of rhymed speech. People formerly had far more confidence in poetry as something great and practical than they have nowadays.

A good part of the formulas have become meaningless,

— particularly the mysterious words at the beginning and end. Once they had a sufficient meaning, but they became even more imposing, like many other things, from the time when their real significance was lost. How solemn sounds the *daries*, *dardaries*, *astaries*, *Dis-unapiter!* with which Cato's charm against sprains begins; how enigmatical the *alau*, *tahalau*, *fugau!* in the Latin charm which was designed to summon back in good condition the strayed monastery swine! (S. Gall MS. 101, in Hattemer, "Denkmale," etc. I. 410). See especially Grimm, "Mythologie," c. 38.

215. Page 90. "Lex Alamannorum," tit. 45, "De Rixis, quæ sæpe fieri solent in Populo."

216. Page 91. The German people may have paid especial honors to the beetle, which they connected in some way with fire and thunder. Grimm, "Mythologie" (3d ed.), p. 657. See also p. 167 regarding the significance of this and other coleoptera.

217. Page 93. Regarding the establishment of the *Sendgerichte*, or circuit court, cf. I. v. Arx, "Geschichte des Kantons St. Gallen."

218. Page 95. *maiores locorum de quibus scriptum est, "quia servi, si non timent, tument," scuta et arma polita gestare incœperant; tubas alio quam ceteri villani clamore inflare didicerant, canes primo ad lepores, postremo etiam non ad lupos sed ad ursos et ad tuscos, ut quidam ait, minandos aluerant apros.* Ekkeh. IV. "Casus S. Galli," c. 3, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 103.

219. Page 105. *per Hadîwigæ, ait, vitam! sic enim iurare solebat . . .* Ekkeh. IV. "Casus S. Galli," c. 10.

220. Page 106.

*Ich hoere ein sueze stimme
in mînem houbet singen
die hoere ich gerne klingen . . .*

"Der Weinschwelg," c. 268 et seq.

221. Page 108. *Elpentrötsch, tölpentrötsch, trilpentritsch, hilpentritsch*, etc., a half-witted man, a *natural*, to whom the *Elbe* or *Elves* have done some harm. See Grimm, "Mythologie," 412.

222. Page 109. The cuckoo is well known as the oracle proclaimer in the springtime's burgeoning greenwood. For many remarkable traditions regarding this bird see Grimm, "Mythologie," 640 *et seq.* A very ancient legend relates that he is a bewitched baker's or miller's boy who cheated poor people out of their paste, and therefore has to wear dun-colored, meal-dusted plumage.

223. Page 110. For a full account of the superstitious conception concerning eclipses and the cause of darkness, which, according to Tacitus ("Annal." I. 28), perturbed the minds of the riotous Pannonian legions, see Grimm, work cited p. 668. — It is a remarkable trait of the early Germans that they felt called upon to assist the moon in *his* supposed tribulations by shouting at the top of their voices!

224. Page 118.

*dô huob er ûf unde tranc
ein hundert slundigen trunc ;
er sprach "daz machet mich junc."*

"Der Weinschweg," v. 197.

225. Page 119. . . . *salutem et profectum in doctrina!* Letter of Meister Ruodpert von St. Gallen in Wackernagel, "Altdeutsches Lesebuch," p. 138.

226. 121. . . . *si fugæ, inquit, copiam haberem, iuvenum optimi, profecto fugerem, nunc autem in vestris quia velim nolim sum manibus, mitius mecum quidem vos condecet agere.* See the full description of Rudimann's nocturnal prowling and detection in Ekkeh. IV. "Casus S. Galli," c. 10, Pertz, "Monum." II. 124.

227. Page 122. The course of study at that time extended to astronomy. In the S. Gall MS. No. 18,

there is a picture of a monk gazing at the stars through a telescope. Notker Labeo gives a detailed description of a celestial globe in the possession of the Monastery. The astronomical writings of the ancients, *e. g.*, Aratus, were known and read. Cf. I. von Arx, "Geschichten," etc., I. 265.

228. Page 123. . . . *antipodes nulla ratione credendi sunt, quia nec soliditas patitur, nec centrum terræ, sed neque hoc ulla historiæ cognitione firmatum, sed hoc poetæ quasi ratiocinando coniectant.* Dictionary of Bishop Salomo.

229. Page 123. This famous disputation is described in detail by the French monk Richer in the third book of his History, c. 68. The Emperor commanded the learned tournament to be brought to an end; for "the day was almost ended, and the auditors were weary with the long and multifarious arguments."

230. Page 123. Monastic discipline took pains to connect a prayer or a hymn with the most varied acts of every day life. The S. Gall MS. 134 contains a collection of such hymns; *e. g.*, a hymn for the first cock-crow (*ad gallicinium*), for fasting, before and after luncheon, at the lighting of the night lamp, etc. Cf. Hattemer, "Denkmale," etc., I. 273 *et seq.*

231. Page 125. . . . *altera dein die . . . magistrum lectura adiit. et cum sedisset, ad quid puer ille venerit, ipso astante inter cetera quæsiuit. propter Grecismum, ille ait . . . domine mi! ut ab ore vestro aliquid raperet, alias sciolum vobis illum attuli. puer autem ipse pulcher aspectu, metro cum esset paratissimus, sic intulit: esse velim Græcus, etc.* Ekkeh. IV. "Causa S. Galli," c. 10, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 125.

232. Page 131. Grimm, "Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer," p. 702. *s. v.* "Scheren."

233. Page 132. See "Thegani vita Hludowici imp." I. 19, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 594.

234. Page 137. . . . *Spillüten und allen den, die gut für ere nement und die sich ze aigen geben hant, den gibt man ains mannes schaten von der Sunnen*, etc. "Landrecht des Schwabenspiegels" — The Popular Code of Swabia.

235. Page 138.

. . . *dabei ein schönes Gärtlein
Darumb gehet ein seiden Faden.*

*And there a lovely garden plot
And round it goes a silken thread.*

Laurins: "Kleiner Rosengarten."

236. Page 139. "But what shall I say of their monstrous shoes? For in this respect the monks are so unreasonable, they are in large measure deprived of the advantage of a covering for their feet. For they have their shoes made so narrow, that when they wear them they are hindered in walking almost as much as if they were set in the stocks. And also on the toes thereof they place long points with ears on both sides, and they take great pains that they fit the feet closely, and their servants are required to use their best skill in bringing them to a mirror-like polish." "Third Complaint of the Primate" at the Synod of Mt. Notre Dame in Richer, III. 39.

237. Page 142. "Hildebrandslied," v. 70 *et seq.* — Prætorius († 1680), in his "Description of the World," mentions "silly juggler's booths in which 'the old Hildebrand' and similar farces called *Puppen-Komödien* are played with puppets."

238. Page 150. This fabulous forbear of all Blacksmiths has been a decidedly favorite figure in *popular German* tradition for ages. Even as late as the last century a house in Würzburg commemorated him by bearing the name "Zum grossen Schmied Wieland." The old

German poem of which he was the hero is no longer extant, but the Norse Saga has paid sufficient attention to him. See Wilkina, "Sage," *Kap.* 19-30; in Von der Hagen, "Altdeutsche und Altnordische Heldensagen," I. 56 *et seq.*

239. 150. See Steub, "Zur Rhätischen Ethnologie," p. 103, *s. v.* "Gossensass und Drei Sommer in Tirol," p. 504.

240. Page 150. *Welandus ab aliquibus Sanctus dicitur . . .* "Acta Sanctorum." *Mart. tom.* I. 364.

241. Page 153. See Massmann, "Gedichte des XVI. Jahrhundert," *Band* II. The epic here partially narrated received in the XIIth Century the form in which it now exists. But the contents is decidedly ancient, and points back to previous Sagas which might easily have found their way to the Greek Court.

242. Page 170. *marmoreum sibi sarcophagum longe ante obitum jussit præparari ob incerti temporis momentum, quem duabus quotidie vicibus diversis alimentorum aliarumve rerum impensis summotenus implevit et victu carentibus hilariter distribuit.* "Vita S. Rimberti," c. 14, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 771.

243. Page 171. . . . *moribus tamen illa suis severis et effertis sepe virum exasperans domi interdum quam secum mansisse multo malle fecerat.* Ekkeh. IV. "Causus S. Galli," s. 10, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 123.

244. Page 172. See Ekkeh. IV. "Causus S. Galli," c. 10, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 108.

245. Page 174. Ekkehard here intertwines himself and his name with what the Saga of the trusty Eckhart relates. See Grimm, "Deutsche Heldensage," 144, 190, and "Deutsche Mythologie," p. 887.

246. Page 177. In the ancient German tongue the festal time of the year when the sun has reached its summer solstice and is about to return is called *Sunnewende* (*solstitium*). Grimm, "Deutsche Mythologie," p. 583. It

corresponds with S. John's Day (June 24). Through the influence of the Church immemorial Easter and May fires were postponed to this day. People sprang through the flames and drove cattle through for the purpose of warding off sickness and misfortune.

247. Page 181. The endeavors of some monks to obtain an elegant figure by tightly lacing round them their ample gowns brought forth the primate's wrathful animadversion at the synod of Mont Notre Dame in 972. See Richer's "Geschichte," III. 37.

248. Page 185. Sirach xxvii. 6. *Im Ofen werden die Geschirre des Topfers bewährt und grechte Menschen in Anfechtung der Trübsal.* In Ecclesiasticus xxvii. 6 it reads: The furnace proveth the potter's vessel; so the trial of a man is in his reasoning.

249. Page 186. The Church of the *quattro coronati* in Rome, with its ancient mosaic pavement and paintings dating from the XIIth Century, is well known.

250. Page 187. A drink of water was a token of renunciation. Grimm, "Rechtsaltertümer," 190. Any one who has been conducted, during the last moments of his stay at Rome, to the murmuring *fontani Trevi*, there amid song and shouts to drink the parting draught, understands this symbolism.

251. Page 191. Cf. Zellweger, "Geschichte Appenzells." It is an interesting study to pursue in all its rich dialectical forms and inflections the alemannish *patois*, which, just as it is spoken to-day, recalls in manifold ways the *althochdeutsch* of Notker Labeo's time. A fundamental introduction to this study is given by Titus Tobler in his "Appenzellischer Sprachschatz," Zürich, 1837.

252. Page 193. Jeremiah ix. 2.

253. Page 193. . . . *ecce elongavi fugiens et mansi in solitudine et exspectabam eum, qui me salvum faceret.* "Vita S. Galli," in Pertz, "Monum." II. 8.

254. Page 194. "See Physiologus, a Record of Animals and Birds." *von des aran geslâhte*, in Wackernagel, "Altdeutsches Lesebuch," I. 165.

255. Page 194. . . . *quantum sub sua cuculla potuit portare.*

256. Page 194. From the VIIIth Century on, it became the earnest desire in France and Germany to provide the churches as richly as possible, and at any cost, with the earthly relics of the Saints. This endeavor gathered fresh impetus in the Xth Century, and reached its high-water mark in the royal house of Saxony. Otto the Great could find nothing more precious in the way of treasures to collect than relics, and he brought together, for his beloved Magdeburg especially, a vast collection. . . . As churches and parishes only rarely volunteered to share their relics with others, methods of compulsion, and even of robbery, were resorted to without hesitation; and when Italy, the mother country of the Saints, was again opened up to the Germans, it became one of the principal objects of these Northern visitors to accomplish their desires, either by money, or by fraud, or by force, and they frequently succeeded, because at that time relics were little valued in Italy. Even S. Metro seems to have fallen a victim to this craze.

. . . But when it was impossible to get possession of the entire body of a saint, they had to content themselves with carrying off as large a fragment as possible, and Verona once more underwent this experience," etc. Vogel, "Ratherius von Verona und das zehnte Jahrhundert," I. 255 *et seq.*

257. Page 197. . . . *sô der tågostérno in scônero fârewo skînet.* Words of the Notker Paraphrase of Marcianus Capella.

258. Page 199. "Den 4. November, 1853, mittag 11

Uhr ist der Eremit Anton Fässler verunglückt und ist totgefallen auf Pommen im Sail. Requiescat in pace. [The Hermit Anton Fässler met with an accident and was killed.] Record in the Stranger's book at the *Wildkirchlein*.

259. Page 201. . . . *in visitatione lactis.*

Dantur de Coldaribus in Seealpe XXX. cascii, meliores alpinis caseis (Rotulus censuum, sec. 13, in S. Gall MS. 456). de Alpe Gamor tres partes lacticinii, quæ per duos dies a Vaccis ibidem compacte fuerint, Portarie nomine. "Citatio Abbatis Cellana," in I. v. Arx, "Geschichte," etc., I. 314. See also Grimm, "Weistümer," I. 191, "Die Rechte von Appenzell."

260. Page 201. *nec sua rura colo, nec sua jura volo!*

261. Page 202. *Tosen* (rave) — to make a murmur in the popular assembly. When any proposition meets with strong opposition in the congregation, then it generally raves — "*toset's gewöhnlich.*" Tobler, "Appenz. Sprachschatz," p. 148.

262. Page 205.

*. . . dic illi nunc de me corde fideli
tantundem liebes, veniat quantum modo loubes,
et volucrum wunna quot sint, tot dic sibi minna,
graminis et florum quantum sit, dic et honorum.*

"Ruodlieb," fr. XVI. 11-15.

263. Page 206. . . . *sêlbun dia êrda, dâr si ûnbûhafte ist, hâbent erfûllet tero lángrîbon mâniginâ in walden, ioh inwôrsten, ioh inlôhen, inwêwen inwâhdon, inwbrûnnon* Notker's Paraphrase of Marcianus Capella, Lib. II. c. 34, in Hattemer, "Denkmale," etc., III. 356.

264. Page 208. See Grimm, "Deutsche Mythologie," p. 29.

265. Page 209. S. Gallus also was persecuted by similar apparitions of demoniac female figures. *nude ad*

litus stantes, quasi ad balneum ingredi volentes, turpitudinemque corporis sui ei monstrantes. "Vita S. Galli" in Pertz, "Monum." II. 9.

266. Page 220. . . . *in nomine Domini mei Jesu Christi, recede ab hac valle. sint tibi montes et colles communes nec tamen hic pecus ledas aut homines.* "Vita S. Galli," in Pertz, "Monum." II. 9. Bears were at that time frequent visitors of the Appenzell Alps, and some places still bear names which preserve their recollection: *Bärenbach, Bärenthal, Bärenalp*. Since tourists have become more numerous in those regions they have wholly retired. Historical records transmitted down to us are so full of references to bears that an industrious man would not have great difficulty in turning them to account in a treatise "On the Significance and Social Position of Bears in the Middle Ages." We have in mind the bear of S. Gallus, which, like a faithful servant, brought him logs and ate bread from his hand; on the artistic dancing bears whose praises are sung in the "Ruodlied," *fr.* III. 85 *et seq.*, and which, as they stood on their hind legs, dancing and carrying buckets while actresses sang an accompaniment, must have given the spectators genuine enjoyment, as may be imagined by the resolutions passed against them by the clergy in special synods assembled. (Regino, "De Eccles. Disciplin." II. 213). The "Lex Alamannor." tit. 99, 12, puts the *Wehrgeld* for killing a tame bear at six *solidi*—all going to prove that people knew how to appreciate bears in Germany, even before their *Kinsbruin* from the Pyrenees was promoted to be the hero of an epic poem.

267. Page 221. *Flutterschnee*, a spongy, light, compact snow. See Tobler, "Appenzell. Sprachschatz," 196.

268. Page 222. *tubas alio quam ceteri villani clanculo inflare didicerant.* Ekkeh. IV. "Casus S. Galli," c. 3, in Pertz, "Monum." II. 103. No genuine canonical

Kuhreigen, or *ranz des vaches*, has as yet been established, in spite of all the investigations of scholars; and in the mountains the opinions of those who, as to the manner born, ought to speak with authority, differ so essentially that while some declare the *Kuhreigen* is never accompanied with words, others will give a characteristic text, always very ancient, and accompanied by the refrain, *Loba! loba!* When the author asked, on the *Säntis*, for the *Kuhreigen*, he was answered by a man taking the *Alphorn* from his shoulder and blowing on it without singing a word or jodling.

269. Page 225. *Ekkehardus autem, notularum peritissimus, pæne omnia hæc eisdem notavit in tabula verbis*, etc. Ekkeh. IV. "Causus S. Galli," c. 19, Pertz, "Monum." II. 140. The S. Gall MS. 270 gives particulars concerning the various kinds of ciphers commonly used. See W. Grimm on German Runes, and Hattemer, "Denkmale," etc. I. 417, where also are to be seen lithographed appendixes containing a number of exact fac-similes. One cannot help noting the resemblance between these characters and those of Etruscan inscriptions.

270. Page 225. Procop. "Bell. Vand." II. 6.

271. Page 226. The games of the S. Gall school-boys, with their thorough resemblance to the gymnastics of the ancients, — races, wrestling with greased hands, single stick, etc., etc., — are described by Notker Labeo in his Latin Vacation poem, printed by I. v. Arx, "Geschichten," etc. I. 259.

272. Page 230. Gospel of S. John iii. 8.

273. Page 231. The very striking inner-Rhodian costume is undoubtedly the ancestral inheritance of the Appenzell people. Tobler, "Appenzell. Sprachschatz," p. 25.

274. Page 232. The *Zaur* is a single short shout which can be indicated by *uhó*, or *u bu hu hui hui*. Tobler, work cited p. 453.

275. Page 233. Appenzell popular custom. Only a few decades ago the great house door of the *Amtmann* or Bailiff Tanner of Herisau was full of the heads of wild beasts designed to arouse the love and respect of his people.

276. Page 233. *Gumpfen, gompela* = hop, leap gayly, *rugglissa (ru-jauchzen)* = to sing the *Rugglüssler*, a characteristic shepherd song in rough doggerel rhymes, but with a fascinating tender air which between the words gives a rich and delightful effect. See Tobler, work cited pp. 233 and 373.

277. Page 235. *panem Gallus bestiae mirandae dat modestiae mox ut hunc voravit, in fugam festinavit*, etc. Ratpert's "Lobgesang" on S. Gallus in the Latin version of Ekkehard IV. in Hattemer, "Denkmale," etc. I. 342.

278. Page 235. Attila's wife was properly "Ospirin," which signifies "Divine she-bear" (*göttliche Bärin*), and in old German form would have been Anspirin. The name is genuine, ancient, and occurs not infrequently. Grimm and Schmeller, "Lat. Gedichte," etc. p. 119, where there is to be found a series of other conjectures based on linguistic grounds why the name Ospirin occurs in "the Waltharilied."

279. Page 237. See the text of "the Waltharius" in Grimm and Schmeller: "Lateinische Gedichte des zehnten und elften Jahrhunderts," Göttingen, 1838, p. 3 *et seq.* German versions by various others, "Kommentar und Anmerkungen" in San-Marte, "Walther von Aquitanien," Magdeburg, 1853.

280. Page 284. *libro completo saltat scriptor pede lato!* Marginal note on a S. Gall MS. printed by I. v. Arx "Berichtigungen und Zusätze," etc. p. 30.

281. Page 290. It is to be devoutly hoped that we may have no more of the chimerical notions of destructive criticism which could find no pleasure in the Nibe-

lungen any more than in Homer until it was knawed into a number of folk songs, composed by various singers in various places, now that Holtzmann's Investigations into the Nibelungenlied (Stuttgart, 1854) may be regarded as shelved. The controversy which continues to be waged against the good Meister Konrad goes to prove that in this, as in other fields of thought, the simplest explanation finds the greatest difficulty of acceptance.

282. Page 296. . . . *insuper et alpes philosophantur, sub quibus jugum Sambutinum Rihpertus lyrico possidet sono, et si nosset antra musarum, esset et talis, ut Cynthius Apollo.* From a letter of Monk Ermenrich of Reichenau, in I. v. Arx, a. a. O., p. 14.

283. Page 298. *assumptus est interea in aulam Ottonum patris et filii . . . Ekkehardus, ut capellæ semper immanens doctrinæ adolescentis regis nec non et summis dexter esset consiliis. ibique in brevi tantus apparuit, ut in ore omnium esset, summum eum aliquem expectare pontificatum. nam et Adelheida regina illum, nunc sancta, per se diligebat.* Ekkeh. IV. "Causa S. Galli," c. 10, in Pertz II. 126.

284. Page 297. . . . *barbarum ferocia ac ferrea corda.* Nithard, Lib. I. 1.

285. Page 300. *domnus Purchardus abbas, elegantissimum sanctæ ecclesiæ speculum.* "Annales San Gallenses Maiores," in Pertz, "Monum." I. 82.

THE END.

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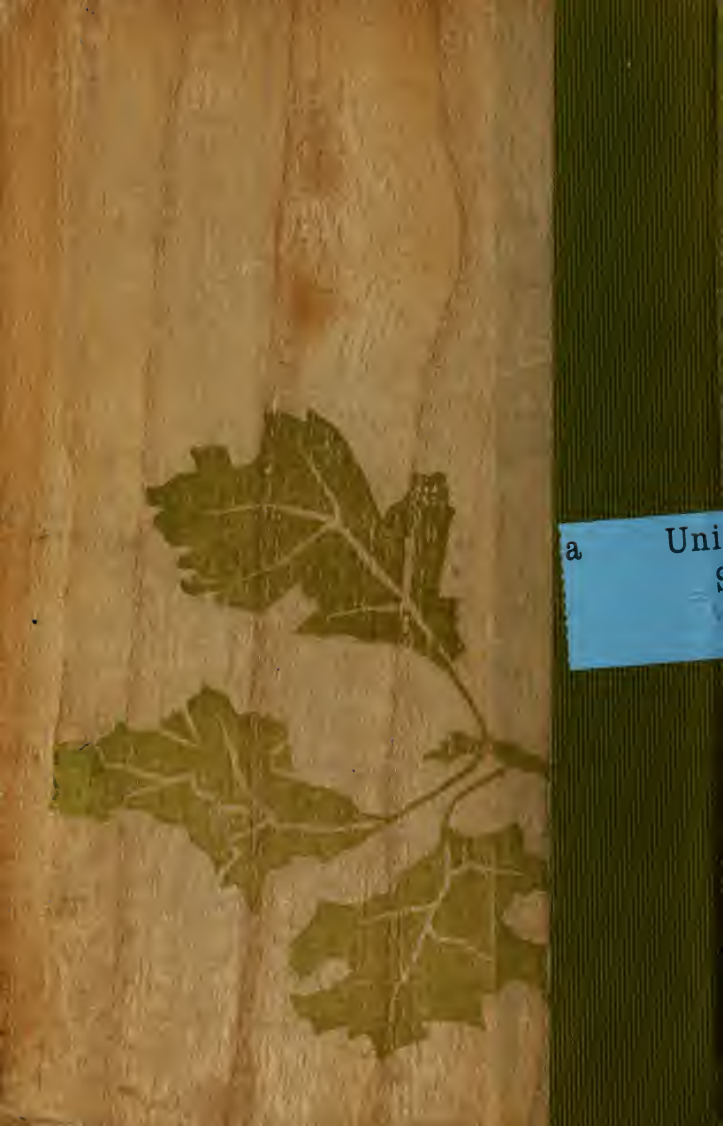
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